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THIN RED LINE

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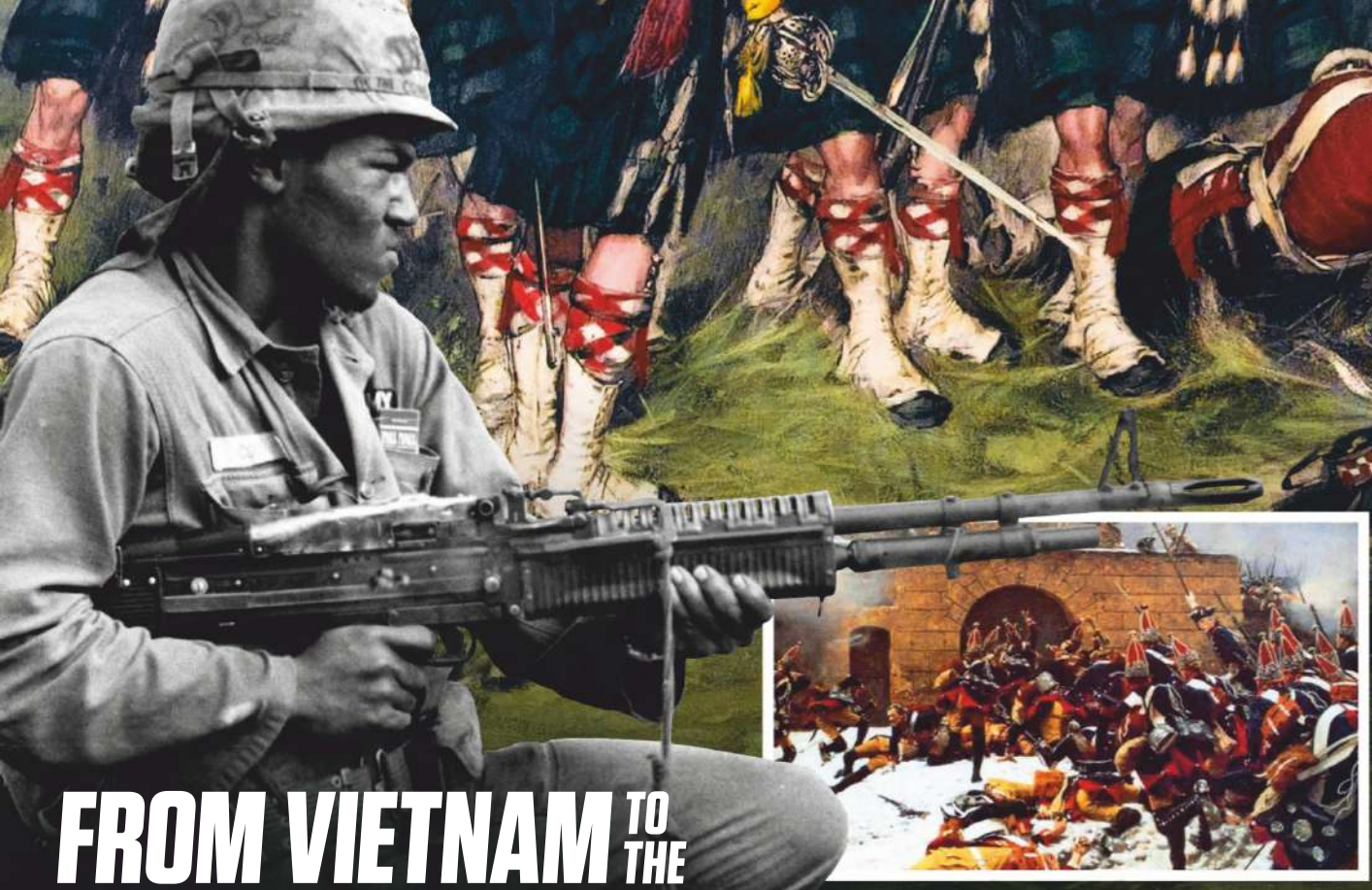

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The Battle Of Balaclava
by Orlando Noir

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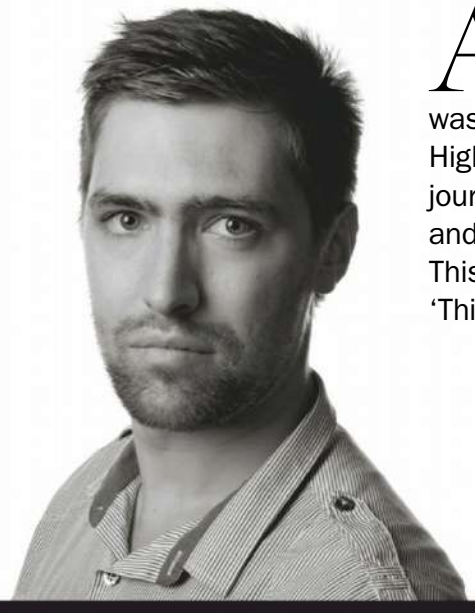
Welcome



Although Tennyson's eulogising of the Light Brigade's fateful charge is far more often recalled than the Battle of Balaclava itself, it also overshadowed another event earlier that same day, which was equally lionised at the time. The disciplined stand of the 93rd Highlanders against Russian cavalry charges was dramatically recalled by journalist William Russell as "a thin red streak topped with a line of steel", and much later made immortal in Robert Gibb's romanticised artwork. This issue historian Mark Simner recounts the real events surrounding the 'Thin Red Line', and retraces the 93rd's heroic conduct beyond Balaclava.

Tim Williamson
Editor-in-Chief

CONTRIBUTORS

TOM GARNER

This issue Tom interviewed Dedan Kimathi Ji Jaga, a Vietnam War veteran who went from patrolling the jungles as a young Marine, to joining the fight for civil rights at home as a member of the Black Panther Party (p. 48).

STUART HADAWAY

While not being the most glamorous of Supermarine's aircraft designs, the Walrus, or Seagull V, was nonetheless a practical seaplane, and one of RAF Coastal Command's key U-boat hunters. Stuart takes a closer look on page 62.

HAREth AL BUSTANI

This month Hareth recounts the heroic story of Gurkha rifleman Lachhiman Gurung, VC. While on patrol in Burma, 1945, Gurung defended his platoon against over 200 enemy combatants, despite losing his right hand (p. 58).

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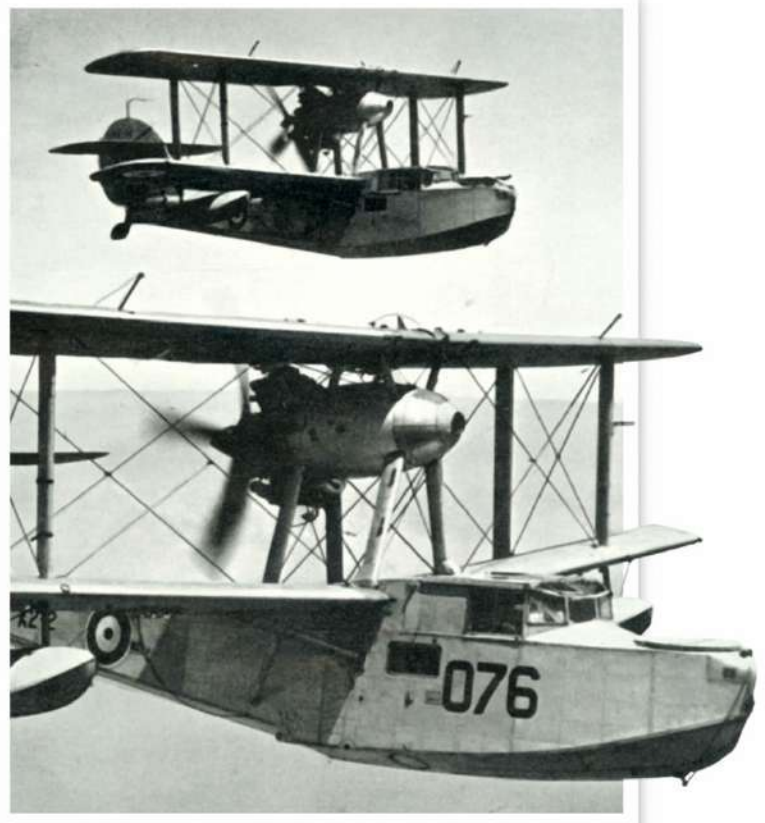

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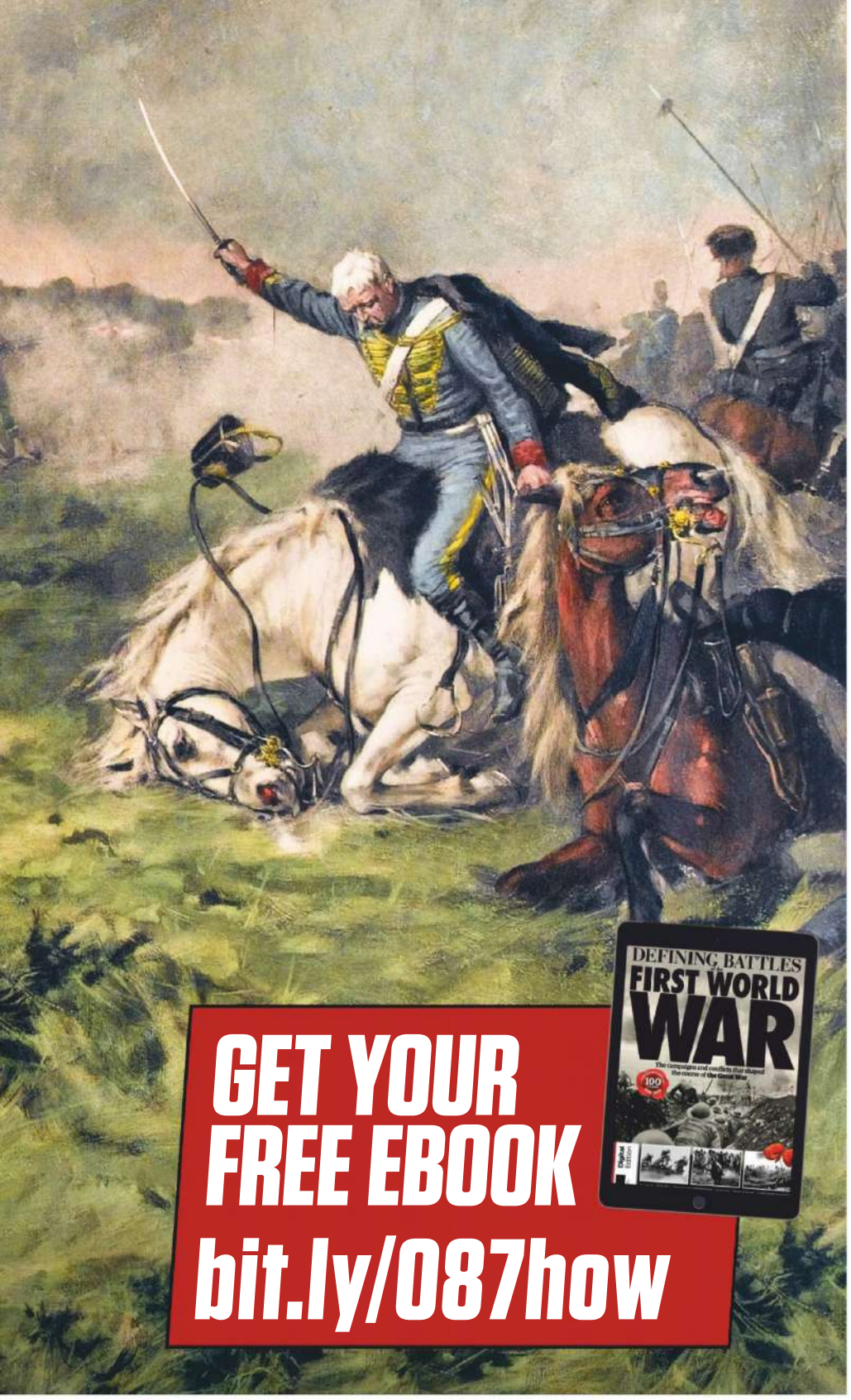

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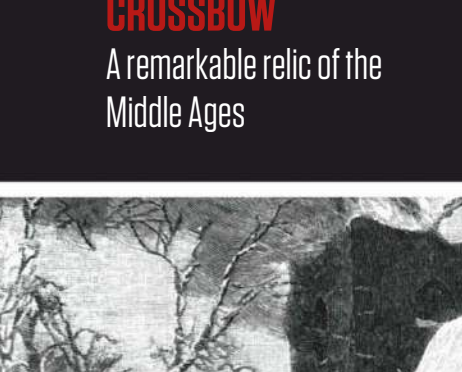

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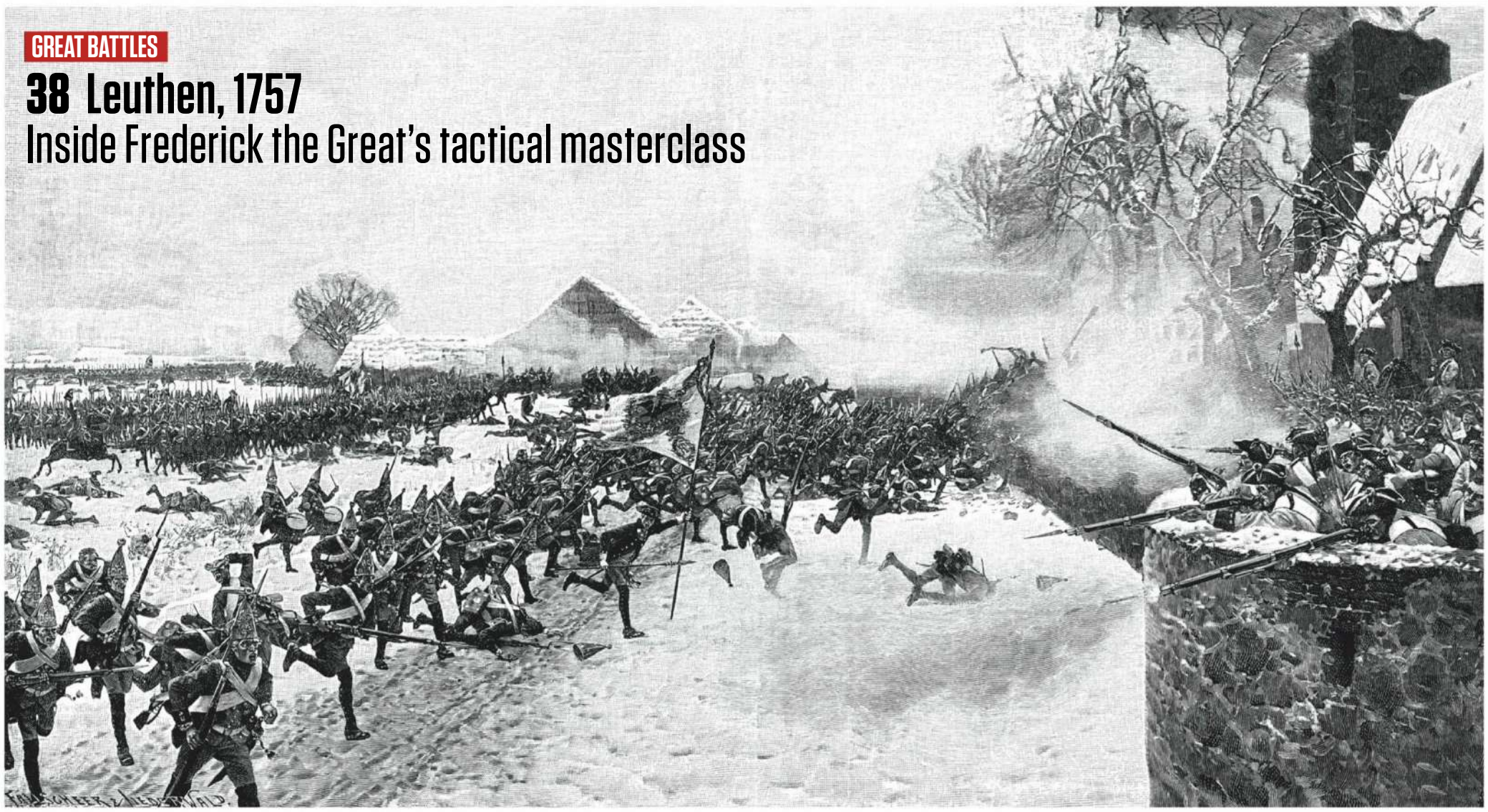

© Getty

WAR in FOCUS

MASKED UP

Taken: c. 1915

French poilu wear masks and goggles to protect from gas attack on the front line. Prior to the first major use of chlorine gas by the Germans at the Second Battle of Ypres, 1915, there was only a basic understanding of how effective chemical weapons would be on the battlefield. As the use of gas became more common, the measures and equipment to counter them grew more sophisticated.

WAR in FOCUS

WINTER OF DISCONTENT

Taken: 18 January, 1990

An elderly Armenian woman walks past a truck transporting a Red Army tank in a street of Yerevan, while tensions grew between Azeri and Armenian nationalists. The disputed territory of Nagorno-Karabakh was fought over between Armenia and Azerbaijan, in the shadow of the collapsing Soviet Union. Though a ceasefire was reached in 1994, the territory continues to be disputed, with small- and large-scale cross-border clashes.

© Getty

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WAR in FOCUS

REMEMBRANCE PROCESSION

Taken: 11 November

Serving and recently demobbed soldiers file past the Cenotaph at Whitehall, London, on Armistice Day, marking the end of the First World War. From 1919 onwards people across the British Commonwealth marked the date with two minutes' silence, in memory of the fallen. Originally a temporary structure to mark the first anniversary of the Armistice, the Cenotaph was later made permanent and became the formal site for Remembrance Sunday commemorations, which continue to be held on the closest Sunday to 11 November.

TIMELINE OF THE...

MONGOL EMPIRE

Genghis Khan begins a bloodthirsty attempt at world domination in Asia and Europe with the expansion of the largest contiguous land empire in history

1206

RISE OF TEMÜJIN

Born as Temüjin Borjigin, the future Genghis Khan comes to power by uniting Mongol nomadic tribes under his rule. He gains his name in 1206 when he is proclaimed as the 'Universal Ruler' of Mongolia. This enables Genghis Khan to begin a supremely ambitious campaign for world conquest.

1211-34

CONQUEST OF JIN CHINA

Genghis Khan conquers northern China and Manchuria, which is ruled by the Jin dynasty. The conquest takes 23 years and the Jin dynasty's destruction is finally overseen by Genghis Khan's third son Ögedai Khan.

Genghis Khan receives envoys from the Jin dynasty

Image: Wiki / PD / Bibliothèque Nationale de France

Aug-Oct 1211

BATTLE OF YEHULING 01

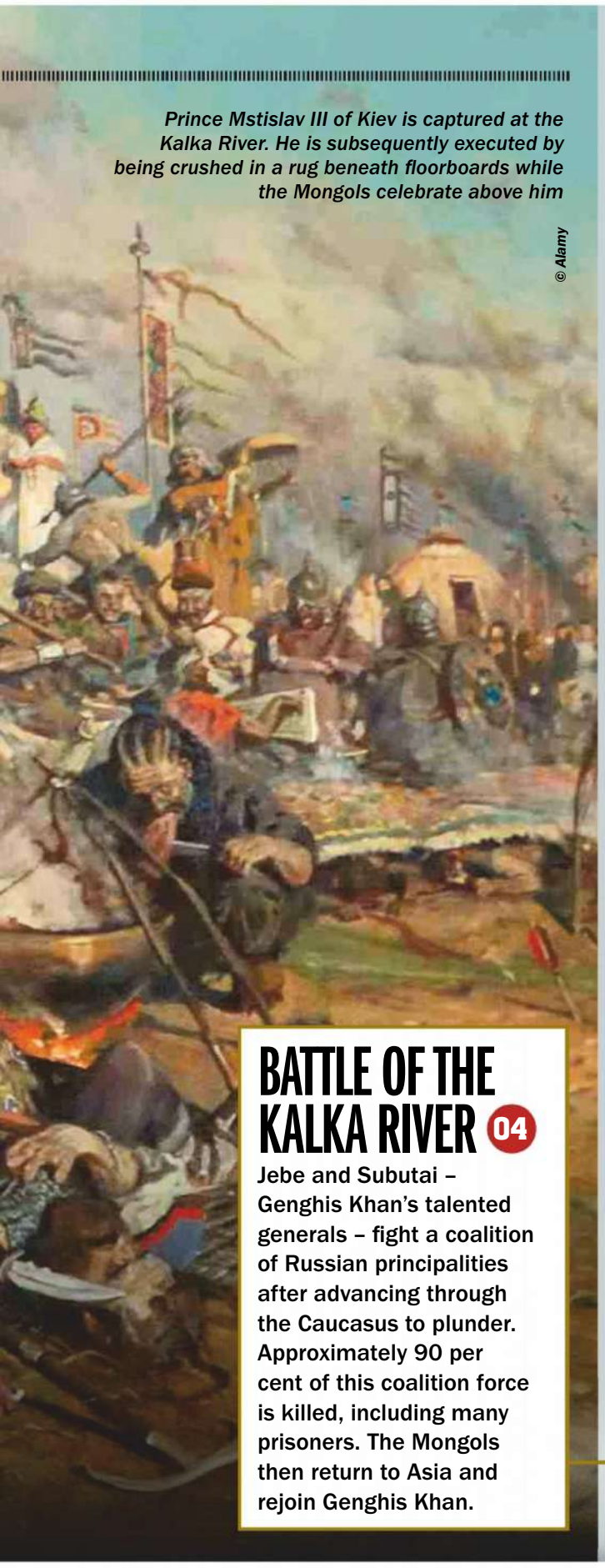
300,000 Chinese soldiers under the command of Jin Emperor Xingsheng are killed by Genghis Khan's numerically inferior force of 100,000 cavalry at the Battle of Yehuling. The Mongols' decisive victory allows them to overrun the Great Wall of China and conquer the northern part of Jin territory.

1 June 1215

SIEGE OF ZHONGDU 02

After breaking through the Great Wall of China in three places, Genghis Khan's forces besiege Zhongdu (now Beijing) before capturing it on 1 June. Thousands of inhabitants are massacred and Jin Emperor Xuanzong is forced to move his capital south to Kaifeng.

Mongol forces enter Zhongdu



Prince Mstislav III of Kiev is captured at the Kalka River. He is subsequently executed by being crushed in a rug beneath floorboards while the Mongols celebrate above him

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BATTLE OF THE KALKA RIVER 04

Jebe and Subutai – Genghis Khan's talented generals – fight a coalition of Russian principalities after advancing through the Caucasus to plunder. Approximately 90 per cent of this coalition force is killed, including many prisoners. The Mongols then return to Asia and rejoin Genghis Khan.

BATTLE OF THE INDUS 03

Genghis Khan fights his first battle in India against the Khwarazmian Empire. The Mongols fight their commander Jalal ad-Din Mingburnu by the Indus River and inflict a crushing defeat. Tens of thousands of Khwarazmian soldiers are killed but Genghis Khan chooses not to pursue campaigns in India itself.

Genghis Khan watches as Jalal ad-Din Mingburnu prepares to ford the Indus River to escape the Mongol army

Source: Wiki / PD / Institute of Oriental Studies, Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan

1219-21 — Spring 1221 — 31 May 1223 — 1227

Mongols fight Khwarazmian Empire forces at the Battle of Valiyan in 1221

Image: Wiki / PD / Bibliothèque Nationale de France

CONQUEST OF THE KHWARAZMIAN EMPIRE

After two Mongol diplomatic missions are massacred by the Persian Khwarazmian dynasty, Genghis Khan invades its territory. Perhaps 25 per cent of the Khwarazmian Empire's population are slaughtered and its territory is annexed to the Mongol Empire.

DEATH OF GENGHIS KHAN

After defeating the Western Xia dynasty in northwest China, Genghis Khan dies of unknown causes. His empire stretches from the Caspian Sea to the Sea of Japan but the Mongols have not finished expanding their territory.

It is not precisely known how Genghis Khan died but some believe he was mortally wounded by an infected arrow wound

© Alamy

“UPON ITS FALL THE CITY IS DESTROYED AND POSSIBLY AS MANY AS ONE MILLION INHABITANTS ARE MASSACRED. BAGHDAD REMAINS DEPOPULATED AND RUINED FOR CENTURIES”

BATTLE OF THE KALKA RIVER 04

BATTLE OF YEHULING 01

SIEGE OF BAGHDAD 05

BATTLE OF THE INDUS 03

SIEGE OF ZHONGDU 02

BATTLE OF BACH ĐANG 06

1237-42

Mid-13th Century

1253-79

INVASION OF KIEVAN RUS’

Batu Khan, grandson of Genghis Khan, invades and conquers Kievan Rus’, which incorporates parts of modern Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. Russian principalities are forced to become vassals of the ‘Golden Horde’, a Mongol Khanate empire. Some elements of Mongol overlordship last until 1480.

The Russian town of Suzdal is sacked by Batu Khan in 1238

Image: Wiki / PD / Alonso de Mendoza

INVASIONS OF EUROPE

Mongol armies launch various invasions into Poland, Hungary, Bohemia, Croatia, Bulgaria and even southeast Germany. They inflict many defeats on European armies but halt their westward advance into German lands when their advance squadrons are defeated in Austria.

One of the most famous Mongol victories against European armies is against a Polish-led coalition at the Battle of Legnica in 1241. Henry II the Pious, High Duke of Poland is killed in the battle

Image: Wiki / PD / J. Paul Getty Museum

CONQUEST OF CHINA

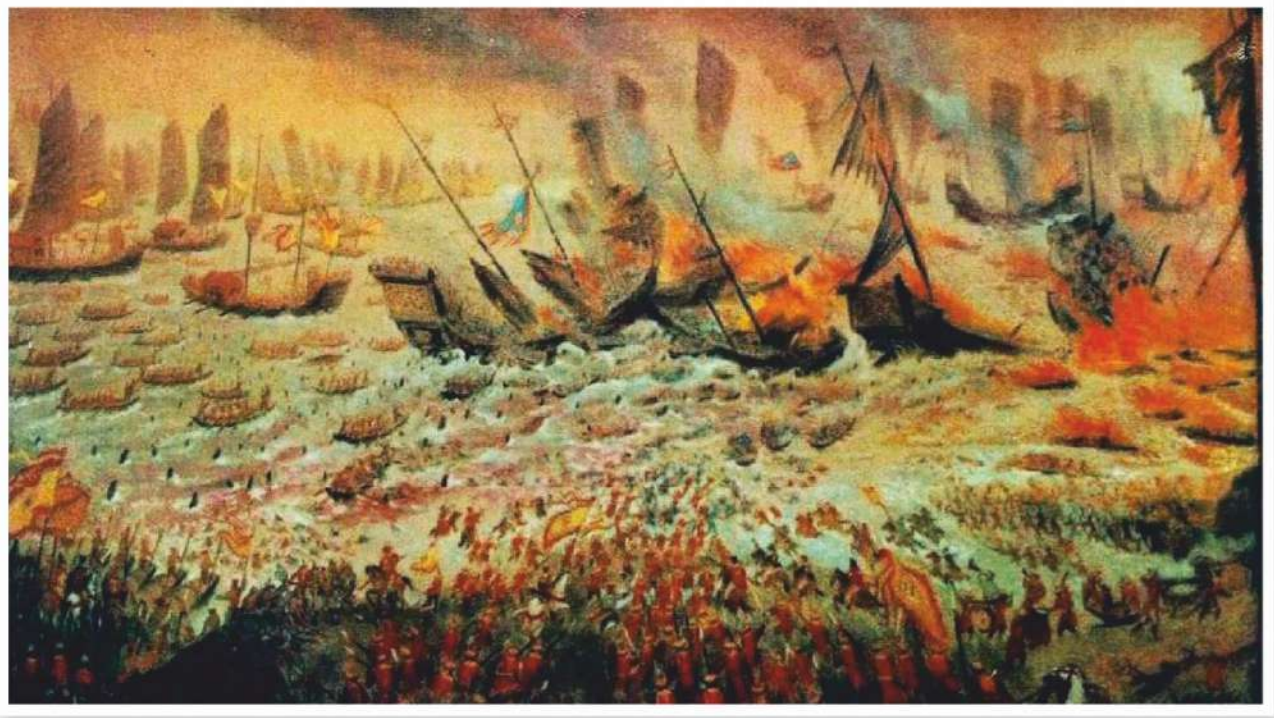
Möngke Khan orders a new invasion of southern China, which is ruled by the Song dynasty, as well as the Middle East. This leads to the Mongol conquest of all China and the establishment of the Yuan dynasty. The first Mongol Yuan emperor of China is Kublai Khan, another of Genghis Khan’s grandsons.

Kublai Khan is pictured with his empress on their throne in an illustrated 16th century manuscript from the Indian Mughal court

Image: Wiki / PD / Smithsonian National Museum of Asian Art

BATTLE OF BACH ĐANG 06

Kublai Khan orders a Yuan Chinese invasion of what are now Vietnam, Burma and Java. However, his forces are defeated by the Vietnamese Tran dynasty in a decisive battle at Bach Đang. This ends Mongol ambitions to conquer Southeast Asia and finally shows the limits of their territorial ambitions.



Vietnamese forces destroy the Yuan fleet at Bach Đang

Image: Wiki / PD / Vietnam National History Museum

Mamelukes defeat the Mongols at the Second Battle of Homs in Syria, 1281

Image: Wiki / PD / Bibliothèque Nationale de France

INVASIONS OF THE LEVANT

Mongol forces make repeated, but ultimately failed attempts to invade the Levant. They manage to destroy the Ayyubid dynasty and capture Aleppo and Damascus but they are defeated by Egyptian Mamelukes and forced to retreat eastwards.

© Getty

1260-1323

9-10 April 1288

29 January-10 February 1258

1260-64

SIEGE OF BAGHDAD 05

Mongols under the command of Hulagu Khan successfully besiege the capital of the Abbasid Caliphate. Upon its fall the city is destroyed and possibly as many as one million inhabitants are massacred. Baghdad remains depopulated and ruined for centuries and its fall is considered the end of the Islamic Golden Age.

Mongol forces conduct siege operations against the walls of Baghdad

Image: Wiki / PD / Bibliothèque Nationale de France

MONGOLIAN CIVIL WARS

The Mongols fight two internal conflicts – the Toluid Civil War and Berke-Hulagu War – between the grandsons of Genghis Khan. These conflicts begin the fragmentation of the Mongol Empire that becomes four khanates: the Yuan dynasty, the Ilkhanate, the Golden Horde and the Chagatai Khanate.

Hulagu Khan is defeated by the Mongol Golden Horde at the Battle of the Terek River in 1262

Image: Wiki / PD / Gallica Digital Library

BATTLE OF MOHI

Unprepared to challenge a relentless and sophisticated nemesis, Hungary's King Bela IV almost met his end at an ill-fated clash over a river crossing

Heir to an illustrious dynasty, the early reign of King Bela IV was spent promoting his allies and punishing any upstarts. Meanwhile, the busy court in Pest-Buda did not heed firsthand accounts from diplomats and refugees of the horrors visited on 'Rus' or Russia. By 1235 the Mongols, led by the feared Subotai (also known as Subudei) began their assault on Russia, culminating in deeper campaigns over the Carpathians and Balkans. True to the overused maxim, resisting the Mongols was futile. Even the Teutonic Knights and their allies learned this the hard way. The Mongols' progress was stopped only by a miracle – for the Christian imagination, at least. With the death of Ögedei Khan in 1241 a new supreme leader had to be chosen by assembly known as 'kuriltai'. If not for this fateful event, Subotai's ablest commander Batu Khan, a grandson of Genghis Khan who set Moscow ablaze in 1238, would have crossed the Rhine in the summer of the following year. Recent scholarly research is now exploring whether climactic or environmental factors also blunted the Mongol invasion of Europe; there may not have been enough pasture available for their horses at the time.

Meanwhile, in Pest-Buda the arrival of fleeing Cumans – a Turkic minority who roved Eastern Europe – should have served as fair warning to Bela IV, but their intelligence on the Mongols went unheeded. Matters took a turn for the worse when Bela IV's own court fomented riots against Cumans in an unnecessary fit of xenophobia. The Mongol invasion of Hungary in 1241 was remarkable for its speed and force. Mere days after Poland's

A mound studded with crosses serves as a national memorial to the battle

King Bela IV may have failed to protect his kingdom but he dedicated the next 20 years of his reign rebuilding it

Source: Wiki / PD / Vienna: Institute of Lithography

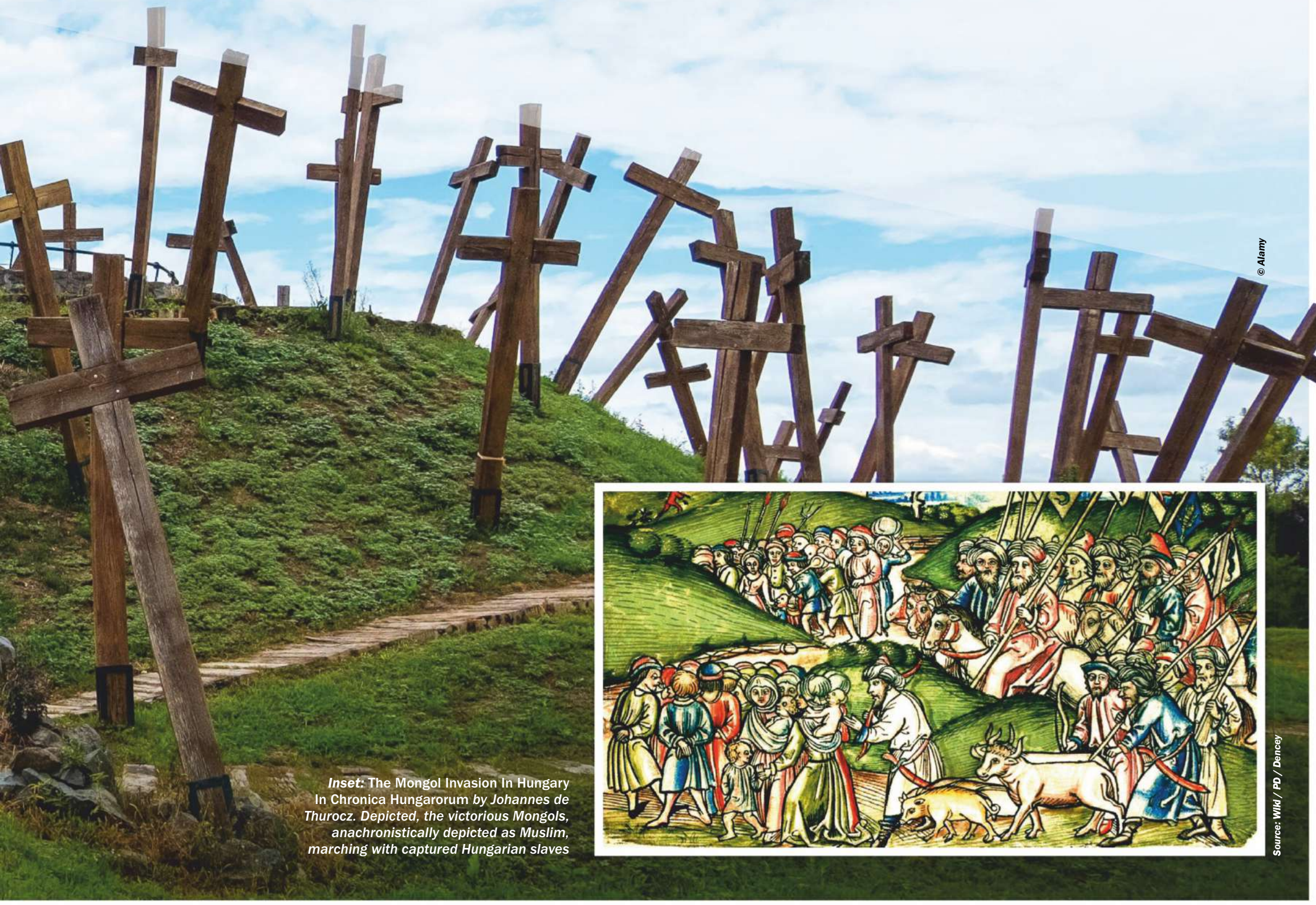
subjugation Subotai's columns entered Hungary unopposed. His court in panic, Bela IV mobilised his noblemen to fight the invasion. The decisive battle took place along the banks of the Sajo River on 10 April 1241. Once his army was gathered it seemed the Hungarians enjoyed the upper hand with their strength in numbers, knights and foot soldiers all counted, reaching 100,000. However, the outnumbered Mongols were better tacticians and just two days prior, one of Subotai's armies swept away the Poles at Legnica.

The failure to assess and observe their foes, the very same mistakes every European ruler made when fighting the Mongols, doomed the Hungarians. The opening stage of the battle of Mohi bridge saw the Hungarian knights block Batu Khan's advance over the narrow passageway. But the Mongols enjoyed a technological advantage; in what appears to be among the earliest uses of field artillery in Medieval European warfare, the Mongols arrayed their siege catapults along the opposite bank and launched bombs at the Hungarians. The historical records do not elaborate on the bombardment's affect on the defenders. What spelled defeat for the Hungarians was the crossing of the Sajo River at two points. First was a column led by Subotai himself and then Batu Khan, having withdrawn his horse-mounted archers, deployed to the southeast of the Hungarians. Once a pincer was effected the Hungarians were thrown into chaos. King Bela IV, knowing the day was lost, made a hasty retreat and quit the field. So passed the darkest moment of his reign.

"THE FAILURE TO ASSESS AND OBSERVE THEIR FOES, THE VERY SAME MISTAKES EVERY EUROPEAN RULER MADE WHEN FIGHTING THE MONGOLS, DOOMED THE HUNGARIANS"

The Battle of Mohi is remembered as a national catastrophe and was the closest a European army got to halting the Mongol advance. After the debacle the Mongols were unopposed as they ravaged the kingdom. Avoiding sieges on hilltop citadels, the Mongols either evicted the populace from towns and villages or torched these dwellings. The ghastly campaign was carried out with a brutal efficiency, leaving devastation nowhere else witnessed in Central Europe on a similar scale. To avoid capture Bela IV escaped to Dalmatia, in modern Croatia, but when he returned home the following year Hungary was in a total state of ruin. The decline of Hungary's population was so severe, in fact, settlers from neighbouring Germany were allowed to occupy abandoned farms.

It took another battle two decades later, this time in the Middle East, to prove the limits of Mongol operational art. Near the spring of Ain Jalut, now located within Israel, two equally matched armies clashed on 3 September 1260. This event pitted the Mamelukes who ruled Egypt against a Mongol contingent, sometimes described as a rear guard, that had eradicated the Assassins of Persia and massacred Baghdad's inhabitants. But what made Ain Jalut an aberration in the long record of Mongol wars were the Mamelukes – a warrior caste descended from Turkic slaves forced to serve the Arab caliphs – who emerged victorious. By comparison, the minor Crusader states along the Levant fared no better against the Mongols than their counterparts in Europe. The effectiveness of the Mamelukes' horsemanship and local knowledge allowed them to rout the Mongols and score a win for the ages. Try as they might, and try they did in the succeeding years, the Mongols never did reach the Nile!



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Inset: The Mongol Invasion In Hungary In Chronica Hungarorum *by Johannes de Thurocz. Depicted, the victorious Mongols, anachronistically depicted as Muslim, marching with captured Hungarian slaves*

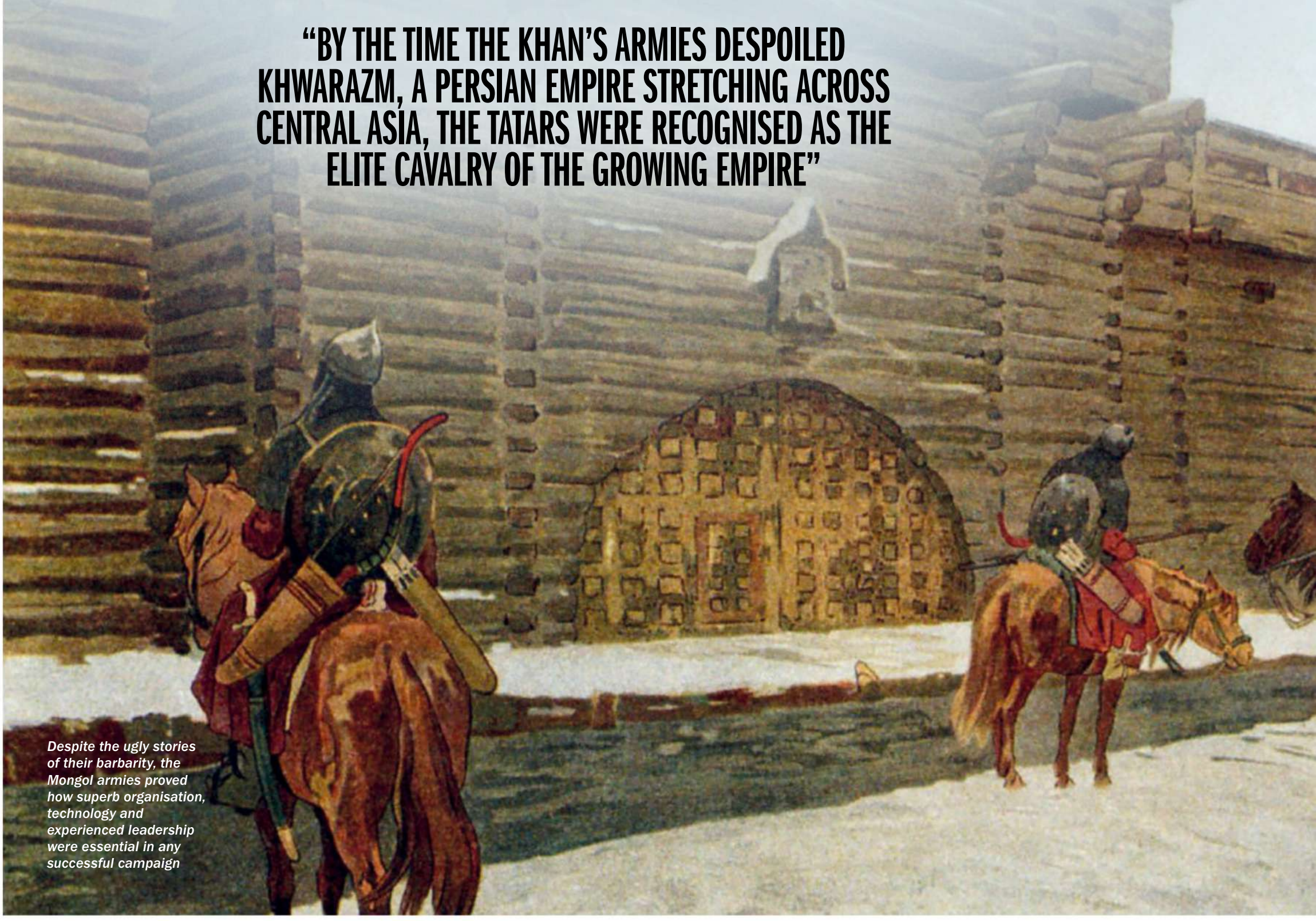
Source: Wiki / PD / Dencey

A HORDE OF MANY NATIONS

They carved a path of destruction across Eurasia, but who were the dreaded Tatars? Making sense of the tangled identities that comprised the Mongol Empire is far from easy

Forever evoking images of horse-riding barbarians, the Tatars are a bewildering ethnic group who changed the course of history yet remain misunderstood. Between ambiguous European chronicles and official Chinese records, the Tatars or 'Tartars' were nomadic pastoralists who, once unified by Genghis Khan after 1206 along with other tribes, began conquering large swathes of northern China ruled by the Song Dynasty (960-1279). By the time the Khan's armies despoiled Khwarazm, a Persian empire stretching across Central Asia, the Tatars were recognised as the elite cavalry of the growing empire. But Mongols considered themselves distinct from Tatars. The usage of Mongol as an identifier for a people originated from the Turkic 'moghul' and later became associated with an Auzbeg or Uzbek dynasty that controlled parts of India from the 16th century onward – these are the famed Mughals. But when Genghis Khan's descendants ruled China, their administration became the prosperous Yuan

"BY THE TIME THE KHAN'S ARMIES DESPOILED KHWARAZM, A PERSIAN EMPIRE STRETCHING ACROSS CENTRAL ASIA, THE TATARS WERE RECOGNISED AS THE ELITE CAVALRY OF THE GROWING EMPIRE"



Despite the ugly stories of their barbarity, the Mongol armies proved how superb organisation, technology and experienced leadership were essential in any successful campaign

Dynasty (1279-1368) that so impressed the Italian adventurer Marco Polo.

A convenient method of distinguishing the Tatars, whom Chinese chronicles dating to the Tang Dynasty (618-907) identified as the 'Da-da', from the other groups they served along with is locating 'Tartary' – an ambiguous location noted in Medieval European texts – as the grasslands east of the Altay mountain range found along the present-day China-Mongolia border. Other Chinese sources further differentiate the Tatars as belonging to the 'Hsiung-nu' tribes who roved the Mongolian steppe. To the west of the Altay mountains, however, are the even larger territories where the Turkic-speaking nations flourished even without a powerful empire binding them together. Of course, these nations drawn along ideas of tribal kinship fought each other over territory and livestock. As far as Europeans were concerned, the usage of 'Mongol' and 'Tatar' became interchangeable during and after the great conquests in the 13th century. Adding to the confusion, the Turkic factions who allied with Genghis Khan never identified themselves as 'Mongols' and neither did the actual Tatars.

As far as the papacy in Rome was concerned this approaching terror from the steppe was the work of Tatars and their diabolical leader, and these facts, along with news of terrible depredations, were communicated with the kings of Europe. Emissaries who visited the Khan knew otherwise and marvelled at the decorum exercised by their hosts. The missionary William of Rubrick was able to schedule an audience with Batu Khan, the conqueror of Russia, whose personal staff included interlocutors fluent in European languages. Emissaries who visited the camp of the 'Golden Horde', a name derived from the Turkic word 'ordo' or 'headquarters', were never molested and marvelled at the protocol of their hosts. But what confusing Medieval accounts never clarified are the many nationalities other than Tatars serving in the Mongol empire. After all, whoever submitted to the khan's armies were treated with leniency and artisans and other skilled professionals found gainful employment in the ranks. Abject slavery was rare in the highly mobile armies led by the khans and, to use a modern term, their order of battle required a lean logistical train organised to meet tight schedules.

Once the vast Mongol empire was established and its leadership occupied by Genghis Khan's sons its cosmopolitan character was undeniable. The ranks of its armed forces were not just occupied by Tatars but Kitans, Uighurs, Jurchens and assorted Turkic factions. The numbers of Chinese in administrative roles are never fully considered but since the Yuan Dynasty itself lasted almost 100 years this would not be possible without a competent and loyal bureaucracy in place to manage the imperial system. When the singular empire broke apart from 1260 onward, its composition was still bewildering. The Ilkhanate that ruled the territories of Persia had a mixed population that wholly embraced Islam while respecting other faiths. The problematic Golden Horde, whose vast domains in Russia remained a threat to Europe, was a tolerant society by the standards of its time. Even when the Golden Horde's power diminished the Tatars who comprised its leadership embodied the identity of a long-lasting ethnic group that remained within the Russian empire. Meanwhile, it was the Chagatay Khanate's dominion over Central Asia that fostered a rare cultural renaissance whose remnants can still be found today.

At present, Mongolia is populated by just over three million people but their ethnic composition is just as varied. The tribes that once served the khans are now settled populations with distinct local and national identities in much of China's northern provinces and the Central Asian states. But the achievement of the Mongol Empire eight centuries ago still stands: no other geopolitical enterprise matched its scale and diversity over an immense and contiguous part of the world.

© Getty

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***Right:** The Tatars who nearly overran Europe were the Turkic tribes who unified under the rule of Genghis Khan. From the 15th century onward, Tatars came to be known as the Turko-Mongolian communities of Russia and Central Asia*

***Far, right:** Mastery of siege engines was a later addition to the Mongol arsenal; Chinese expertise was its likeliest source*

© Getty

CONQUERING KHANS

Three generations of Mongol emperors and commanders set out on a family quest to dominate the known world

© Alamy

It is estimated that approximately one in 200 men across the world are direct descendants of Genghis Khan

GENGHIS KHAN *c.1155-1227*
THE ALL-POWERFUL 'UNIVERSAL RULER'

Genghis Khan's very name has been described by historian Richard Overy as "a byword for military ruthlessness and competence". Born as Temüjin Borjigin in Mongolia's Khentii Mountains, he began life as a member of a Mongol royal clan. His father was poisoned when he was nine years old and Temüjin lived in extreme poverty with his family for some time. However, with sheer skill and determination he became a warrior and managed to eventually unite all of the Mongol tribes under his rule. He was declared 'Genghis Khan' ('Universal Ruler') of all the Mongolian steppe people in 1206 but his ambitions did not stop there. The former Temüjin now applied his determination for world conquest and prepared the Mongols exclusively for war.

Genghis Khan's soldiers were highly disciplined and his commanders were selected either for their family links or their proven loyalty to him. His Mongol armies were highly skilled both as cavalry and in siege warfare, which allowed for swift advances and the investment of fortresses and cities. With such forces, Genghis Khan defeated all before him. He first conquered large parts of China, including the territories of the Western Xia and Jin dynasties. His attentions then turned westward with the conquests of the Qara Khitai and the Khwarazmian Empire.

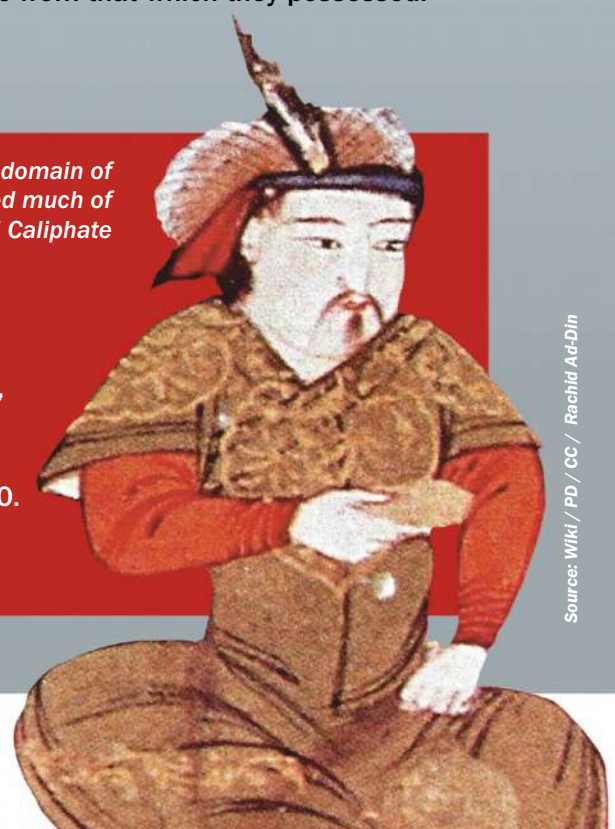
Mongol armies under the command of Genghis Khan's subordinates also launched invasions into Georgia, Armenia, Bulgaria and parts of Russia. These invasions added Persia and Transoxiana (Central Asia) under Mongol rule with additional raids and battles occurring in Afghanistan and India. By the time Genghis Khan died in 1227, he and his generals had conquered approximately half of Asia and penetrated into Europe.

Nevertheless, these conquests came at a huge human cost. The Mongols earned a reputation for brutality as countless populations were massacred if they did not submit to Genghis Khan's rule. This was a deliberate policy and explains how terror accounted for their swift, unprecedented conquests. Genghis Khan himself was highly intelligent and capable of adapting his strategies depending on which enemy he was fighting. He was ultimately born for warfare and stated, "A man's greatest pleasure is to defeat his enemies, to drive them before him, to take from that which they possessed."

HULAGU KHAN *c.1215-65* THE DESTROYER OF BAGHDAD

Hulagu was a brother of Kublai Khan and the two siblings once reputedly met their grandfather Genghis Khan in 1224. He was ordered by his elder brother Möngke to extend Mongol power in Islamic territories. Hulagu destroyed a militant Islamic sect known as the 'Assassins' in northern Iran in 1256 with a huge army before marching on Baghdad, which was the capital of the Abbasid Caliphate.

The Abbasids had once ruled huge Middle Eastern territories from Libya through to Persia but the 1258 siege was a calamity. The caliph refused to swear allegiance to Hulagu and when the Mongols breached the walls the city was sacked for eight days. Hundreds of thousands of people were killed (including the caliph) and Baghdad, which was then the intellectual capital of Islam, was destroyed. Hulagu went on to capture Syria but he was defeated by Mamelukes at the Battle of Ain Jalut in 1260. He later fought civil wars against his cousin Berke Khan, which prevented further Mongol expansions westwards.



Hulagu founded the Ilkhanate, a sub-domain of the Mongol Empire that encompassed much of what had previously been the Abbasid Caliphate

Source: Wiki / PD / CC / Rachid Ad-Din

Above: *Genghis Khan on his deathbed, surrounded by his four sons Jochi, Jagatai, Ogodai and Tuli. Miniature from 'Livre des Merveilles du Mmonde' - Voyage d'Hayton*

JÖCHI *c.1182-1227*

GENGHIS KHAN'S ELDEST SON WHOSE LEGITIMACY DENIED HIM AN EMPIRE

Jöchi's paternity is uncertain as his mother Börte (Genghis Khan's wife and empress) was a prisoner of a rival called Chilger Bökh. Nevertheless, Genghis Khan always treated Jöchi as his first son and he became a prominent commander in the Mongol army. Shortly after his father became the undisputed ruler of Mongolia, Jöchi extended the Mongol Empire for the first time by capturing areas of Siberia. He went on to fight two campaigns in what is now Kyrgyzstan and played an important role in the conquest of the Khwarazmian Empire.

Jöchi owned lands in the western part of the Mongol Empire, including a vassal kingdom and as Genghis Khan's eldest son he was poised to inherit his father's empire. However, his younger brother Chagatai questioned his paternity with Genghis Khan reiterating that Jöchi was his child. Nevertheless, Genghis Khan did not want to split his empire unnecessarily and named his third son Ögedei as his successor. A rift developed between Jöchi and his father with the former dying before Genghis Khan's death.

KUBLAI KHAN *1215-94* THE FIRST YUAN EMPEROR OF CHINA

A grandson of Genghis Khan, Kublai inherited the Mongol Empire from his elder brother Möngke in 1260 but had to secure his power by defeating his younger brother in a civil war that lasted until 1264. Although his empire technically extended from the Black Sea to the Pacific Ocean, most of his personal power was concentrated in Mongolia and – most importantly – China.

Kublai completed the full conquest of China in the 1270s and became its first Mongol emperor. His dynasty was known as 'Yuan', which meant 'first' or 'fundamental'. Unlike his predecessors who viewed their conquests almost purely for personal gain, Kublai understood that he had to successfully administer Mongol possessions, particularly in China. One of his Chinese advisors told him, "I have heard that one can conquer an empire on horseback, but one cannot govern it on horseback."

Kublai broke away from the nomadic culture of the Mongolian steppes and sought to restore Chinese prestige. China prospered under his rule although Yuan invasions in Southeast Asia were not successful. The Mongol Empire reached the zenith of its power under Kublai but his reign also cemented its limits.

Right: *Kublai Khan introduced the first paper currency in China and famously met and employed the Venetian explorer Marco Polo as a foreign emissary*

Source: Wiki / PD / National Palace Museum Taiwan

ÖGEDEI KHAN *c.1186-1241*

GENGHIS KHAN'S HEIR WHO BUILT ON HIS FATHER'S LEGACY BY GREATLY EXPANDING THE MONGOL EMPIRE

Although he was Genghis Khan's third son, Ögedei inherited the Mongol Empire after his father's death following a succession dispute between his elder brothers. Reigning from 1229-41, Ögedei expanded Mongol territory even more, beginning with China where he secured its northern conquest before threatening the Song dynasty in the south. He then fought on multiple fronts by clashing with the Koreans to the east but also sending armies against the Slavs in Russia.

Ögedei's armies achieved great success in Russia where their conquests included the capture of Moscow, Vladimir and Kiev. The latter was burned to the ground, which encouraged the Mongols to press further into Eastern Europe. The secret to these successes was that Ögedei ably delegated commands to his talented generals. He also knew that consolidating Mongol power meant harnessing conquered societies rather than destroying them. This was most notably displayed in northern China, whose wealth and technologies greatly aided Mongol campaigns.

Ögedei died during a drinking bout, which prompted his soldiers to call off an attempted invasion of Western Europe

Source: Wiki / PD / National Palace Museum Taiwan

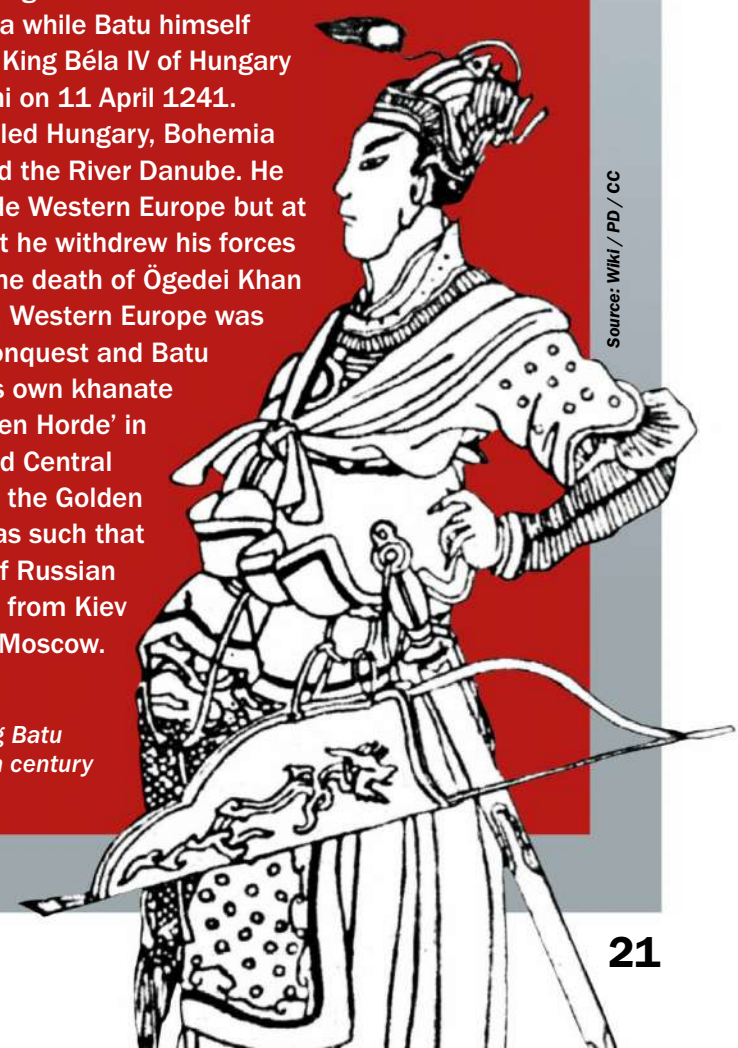
BATU KHAN *c.1205-55*

THE FOUNDER OF THE GOLDEN HORDE

The son of Jöchi, Batu was given control of the western part of the Mongol Empire in 1235. He conquered Kievan Rus' in what is now Russia, Ukraine and Belarus by 1240 and the following year he led an invasion into Central Europe. A Mongol army destroyed Henry II, High Duke of Poland at the Battle of Legnica while Batu himself decisively defeated King Béla IV of Hungary at the Battle of Mohi on 11 April 1241.

Batu now controlled Hungary, Bohemia and the area around the River Danube. He was poised to invade Western Europe but at this critical moment he withdrew his forces when he heard of the death of Ögedei Khan in December 1241. Western Europe was spared a Mongol conquest and Batu instead founded his own khanate known as the 'Golden Horde' in southern Russia and Central Asia. The impact of the Golden Horde on Russia was such that the centralisation of Russian society moved east from Kiev to the area around Moscow.

A depiction of a young Batu Khan based on a 14th century Chinese drawing



Source: Wiki / PD / CC

WEAPONS & TACTICS

Instilling fear in an enemy was not merely the by-product of Mongol tactics, it was a keystone of their entire strategy

Psychological warfare was a key tactic employed by the Mongols. It is easy to characterise their treatment of captured civilians and enemy soldiers as mere barbarity (and it was undeniably brutal) but there was actually a definite purpose behind it.

By creating a terrifying image of themselves, the Mongols made it more likely that any city they approached might surrender without putting up resistance. It also made it more likely that an area would remain submissive after Mongol forces had passed through – this was hugely important, as the invading force did not have enough men to leave garrisons behind.

For this reason, civilians in a captured city that had offered resistance would be systematically slaughtered or taken into slavery. A small proportion of the population would be allowed to go free, however, in order to spread the word of the ferocity of the Mongols and the futility of resistance. When the city of Bukhara was taken, during the Mongol conquest of Khwarezm, several thousand civilians were allowed to go free, but only after witnessing the execution of 30,000 of their fellow citizens.

In battle, the Mongols would sometimes make use of a tactic known as kharash, in which prisoners would be herded before the main army as they advanced into battle. More than a mere exercise in psychological warfare, the prisoners would act as a human shield, taking the brunt of the enemy's defensive fire. The use of explosives and burning tar in artillery barrages was also as much intended to spread fear and chaos in enemy ranks as it was to do any genuine damage.

"CIVILIANS IN A CAPTURED CITY THAT HAD OFFERED RESISTANCE WOULD BE SYSTEMATICALLY SLAUGHTERED"

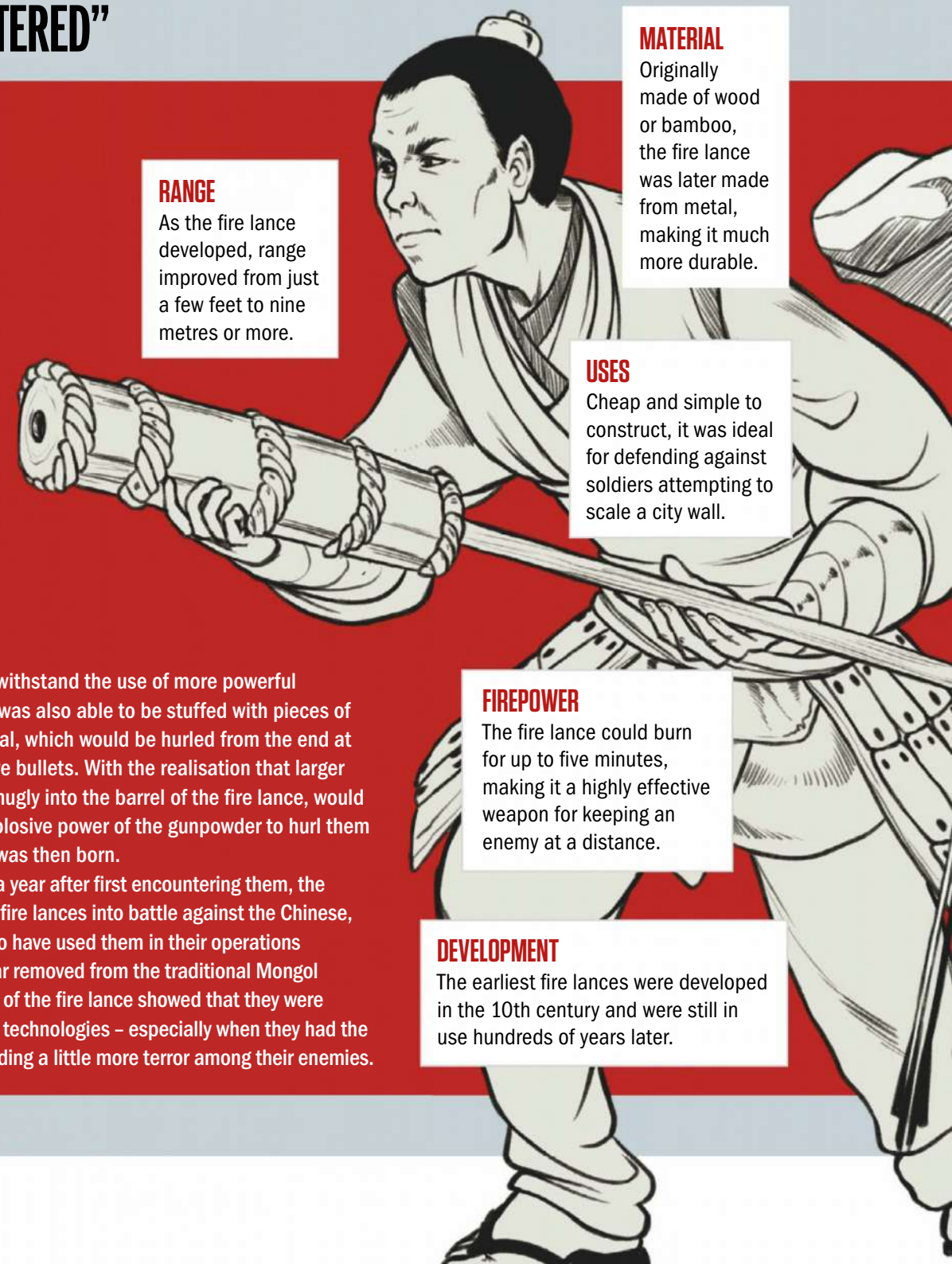
Because of the fearsome image the Mongols carefully crafted, many cities and even whole tribes submitted without resistance. The Mongols would always accept this gladly – it was far easier than having to conquer a foe, and treating those who submitted with the same harshness as those who resisted would undermine the effects of their psychological warfare campaign.

Even so, the Mongols' terror tactics sometimes worked against them, especially in Europe, where their already terrifying reputation was enhanced with all manner of fanciful embellishments. The Mongols were even professed by some to be the descendants of Gog and Magog, a pair of man-eating giants who had terrorised the world in ancient times. Facing up to such inhuman opposition convinced many that no mercy could be expected from the Mongols even if instant submission was offered.

MONGOL ARSENAL

The Mongols' most famed weapon was the bow, but their arsenal was varied and expanded steadily during their ascendancy. Just as the Mongols were willing to take on foreign knowledge and expertise (as in the case of siegecraft) they were also happy to adopt foreign weaponry.

Not only did they take on weapons such as catapults from China and other artillery from Persia, they were able to adapt them to their needs. Combining elements of both Chinese and Persian designs, the Mongols developed a catapult with a range of 350 metres. Explosives, naphtha and rocks would all be used as ammunition, and at the Sajo River in Hungary in 1241, the Mongols were able to employ a rolling barrage of artillery fire to enable them to cross a narrow bridge to get at the main army of King Bela.



RANGE
As the fire lance developed, range improved from just a few feet to nine metres or more.

MATERIAL
Originally made of wood or bamboo, the fire lance was later made from metal, making it much more durable.

USES
Cheap and simple to construct, it was ideal for defending against soldiers attempting to scale a city wall.

FIREPOWER
The fire lance could burn for up to five minutes, making it a highly effective weapon for keeping an enemy at a distance.

DEVELOPMENT
The earliest fire lances were developed in the 10th century and were still in use hundreds of years later.

FIRE LANCE

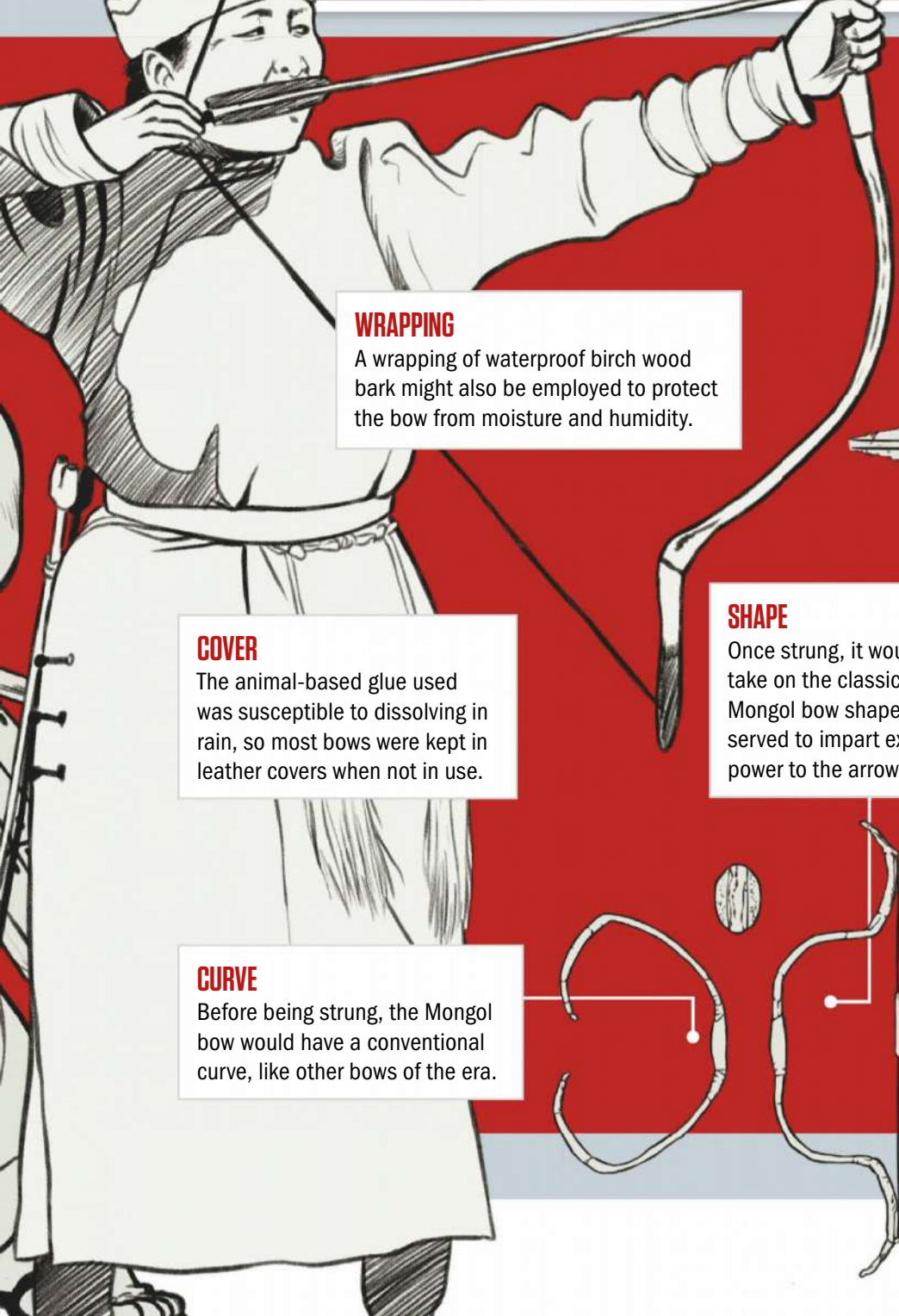
The fire lance, the precursor of the gun, was a perfect example of the Mongols' willingness to adopt foreign technology. At the siege of Kaifeng in China in 1232, they had been terrified by this strange weapon, which spouted fire up to nine metres from the end of a spear. Invented by the Chinese, it was originally a form of flamethrower, able to keep an enemy at a distance, but it also had a significant psychological impact upon enemy soldiers, especially those who had not encountered one before.

Initially, it was little more than a roman candle-style firework, constructed of bamboo or even paper and attached to a spear (once the fire had burnt out, the lance could be quickly converted back into a regular spear or pike). As it developed, however, the principle elements of what would later become firearms appeared, including the replacement of the bamboo barrel with one made of metal, which could withstand the use of more powerful gunpowder. The lance was also able to be stuffed with pieces of stone or scraps of metal, which would be hurled from the end at the enemy like primitive bullets. With the realisation that larger projectiles, which fit snugly into the barrel of the fire lance, would enable more of the explosive power of the gunpowder to hurl them forth, a crude firearm was then born.

By 1233, less than a year after first encountering them, the Mongols were carrying fire lances into battle against the Chinese, and they are believed to have used them in their operations in Hungary. Although far removed from the traditional Mongol weapons, the adoption of the fire lance showed that they were willing to embrace new technologies – especially when they had the added benefit of spreading a little more terror among their enemies.

© Getty

After the fall of Nishapur, in modern-day Iran, allegedly the entire population of the city was put to death – an estimated 1,748,000 people – after which pyramids of their skulls were also supposedly built

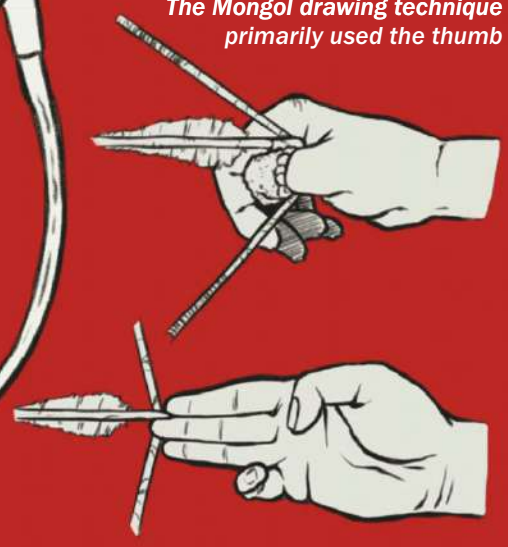


WRAPPING
A wrapping of waterproof birch wood bark might also be employed to protect the bow from moisture and humidity.

COVER
The animal-based glue used was susceptible to dissolving in rain, so most bows were kept in leather covers when not in use.

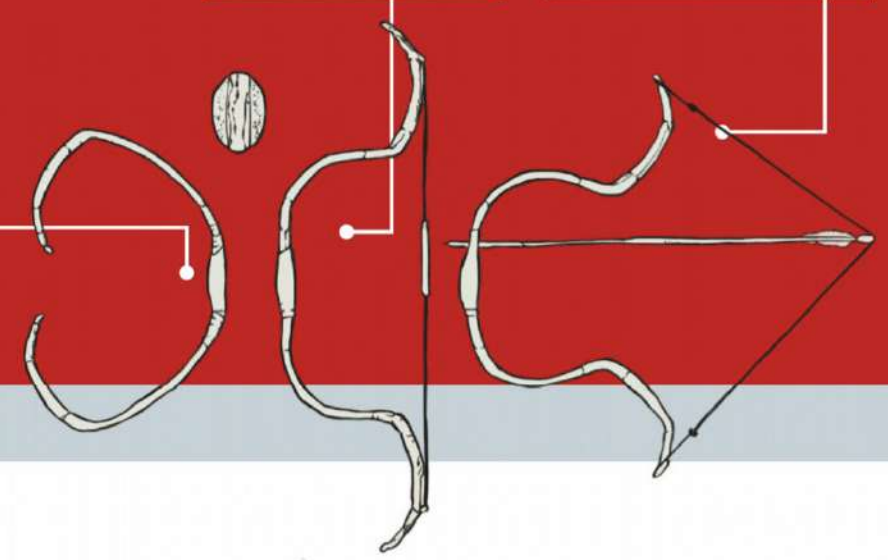
CURVE
Before being strung, the Mongol bow would have a conventional curve, like other bows of the era.

The Mongol drawing technique primarily used the thumb



SHAPE
Once strung, it would take on the classic Mongol bow shape that served to impart extra power to the arrow.

SMALL BUT MIGHTY
The composite design allowed the Mongols to use smaller bows (more easily handled in battle) without sacrificing power.



COMPOSITE BOW

The bow was the most important weapon in the Mongols' arsenal. An ordinary bow, made of wood with a drawstring, was easy to construct, however, the Mongol bow was a completely different entity.

Utilising a composite structure, with wood or bamboo, horn, sinew and animal-based glue, it was far more powerful than a regular bow, but also took far longer to construct. The wooden core had a strip of horn glued to one side, with animal sinews on the opposite side, all held in place with glue. Both horn and animal sinew had greater elasticity compared to wood and could store more energy. Once the component pieces had set together, the bow would be drawn back against its natural curve, creating the familiar shape and imparting even more power into the projectile.

Mongol warriors would carry about 60 arrows into battle – different tips would be utilised for different jobs (incendiary arrows would be used to set fire to buildings, for instance).

Draw strength on the Mongol bow would be anywhere from 60 pounds and upwards, although claims have been made that some had a draw weight of 160 pounds (which must have been incredibly rare).

The string would be drawn using only the thumb. This 'Mongolian draw' helped to ensure that the release would be smooth and not detract from the power imparted to the arrow. Many Mongols would use thumb rings to protect their digit from the extreme stress involved in the repeated operation of the recurve bow.

The Mongol bow was accurate up to a range of some 270 metres, but could carry much further with less accuracy. It was also capable of piercing the armour of the day at a range of 90 metres or so.

THIN RED LINE

Overshadowed by the Charge of the Light Brigade, the heroic stand of the 93rd Sutherland Highlanders at Balaclava nevertheless passed into legend

WORDS **MARK SIMNER**

The 93rd at the Battle of Balaclava, who would be immortalised by 'The Thin Red Line'

NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM

Image courtesy of the National Army Museum

www.nam.ac.uk

Among Lord Raglan's forces earmarked for the war against Russia at the outset of the Crimean War, was the hardy Highland Brigade. The brigade consisted of three Scottish battalions, including the 93rd (Sutherland Highlanders) Regiment of Foot under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel William Bernard Ainslie. The regiment was eager to prove its mettle on the battlefield. In all, the battalion numbered 34 officers, 107 non-commissioned officers, 21 drummers, and 950 privates. Unbeknown to the men of the 93rd, they were soon to leave their mark on history as the 'Thin Red Line'.

Their journey to the Crimea began on 27 March 1854, when they embarked for the Black Sea aboard the troopship Himalaya. While the voyage itself was uneventful, the battalion was to suffer a rather inauspicious start to the campaign when cholera swept through its ranks, killing 54 of their number and infecting over another 400. Nevertheless, the Allied commanders had set their objective – the Russian naval base at Sevastopol.

Surgeon William Munro of the 93rd described the regiment's final departure for the Crimea, "A wonderful sight that mighty fleet, even while lying at anchor; but when it got under weigh and steamed out into the open sea, spreading out in long, parallel lines, and covering the face of the waters as far as the eye could see, it appeared to be magnified one hundredfold. The light-armed war-ships led the van, and on either flank hovered the mighty leviathans, which, with their huge hulls, immense spread of canvas, and tiers of guns, inspired us with confidence in their power to protect, and at the same time reminded us of the old homely smile of hens gathering their chickens under their wings."

Thankfully for the Highlanders, their subsequent landing in Crimea was unopposed. However, a large Russian force under Prince Alexander Sergeevich Menshikov had the intention of blocking the Allied advance on Sevastopol, and the first major action of the war would take place on the banks of the Alma River on 20 September. Among those who would see action that day were the men of the 93rd.

Battle of the Alma

The Allied plan of attack was formulated by Marshal Leroy de Saint-Arnaud, commander of the French army. His intention was for the

The 93rd (Sutherland Highlanders) Regiment of Foot in action during the Battle of the Alma, 20 September 1854

© Alamy

French to assault the Russians on the left flank looking towards the highlands near the mouth of the river while the British attacked from the centre. This, it was hoped, would not only cut the Russians' line of retirement but also their reinforcement and supply. The time set for the attack was 5.00am, with the French 2nd Division to lead the way while the remaining Allied divisions were expected to move up several hours later. The attack would be supported by the guns of the Allied fleet anchored along the coast.

Unfortunately, Saint-Arnaud's plan began to unravel almost immediately on the morning of the action. The British, anxious to redeploy to protect their vulnerable baggage train, were found to be not ready at the agreed time, forcing the schedule of events to be amended. Nevertheless, the disgruntled French took advantage of the delay to make coffee and the Allies were eventually formed up and ready to commence their advance at 10.30am.

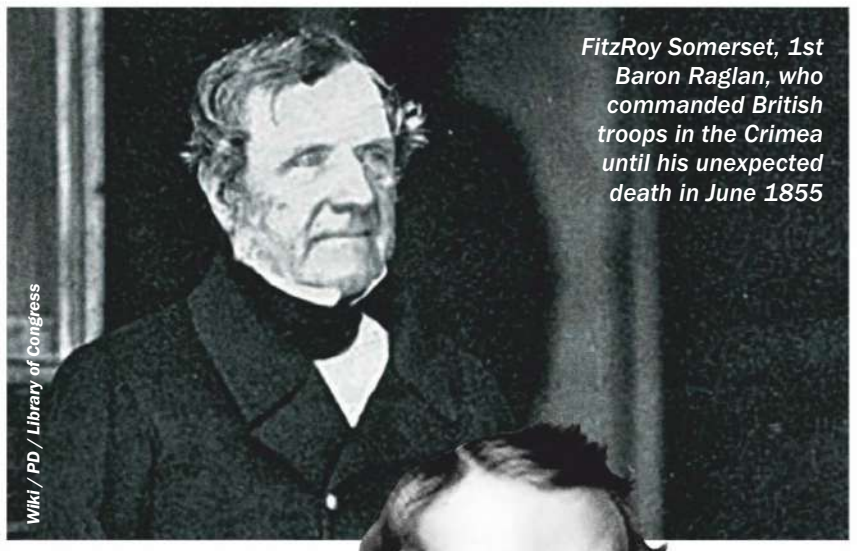
Watching from above on a narrow escarpment looking over the river was Menshikov, who had formed up his army on the slopes of Kourgané Hill. Above the village of Bourliuk lay the Greater and Lesser Redoubts, forming the centre of the Russian line of defence. Menshikov had chosen his position well, for the Allies would be forced to conduct their assault against a well-defended position on high ground. Nevertheless, the Russian commander had paid little attention to the west of his line, which included 350-feet high cliffs facing towards the river, believing no attacker would make such a seemingly impossible assault.

"POOR ABERCROMBIE, WHO WAS A FEW PACES TO MY RIGHT, WAS SHOT THROUGH THE HEART"

Despite the French general's plan, Raglan decided on a frontal assault of Kourgané Hill. At just after 1.00pm, the Allies began their advance across the river. The Highland Brigade were to assault the heavily defended Russian right, being eventually committed to the attack at around 3.30pm, advancing up the eastern slopes of the Kourgané. To their right advanced the Guards Brigade, who, it was said, manoeuvred with their customary parade ground precision.

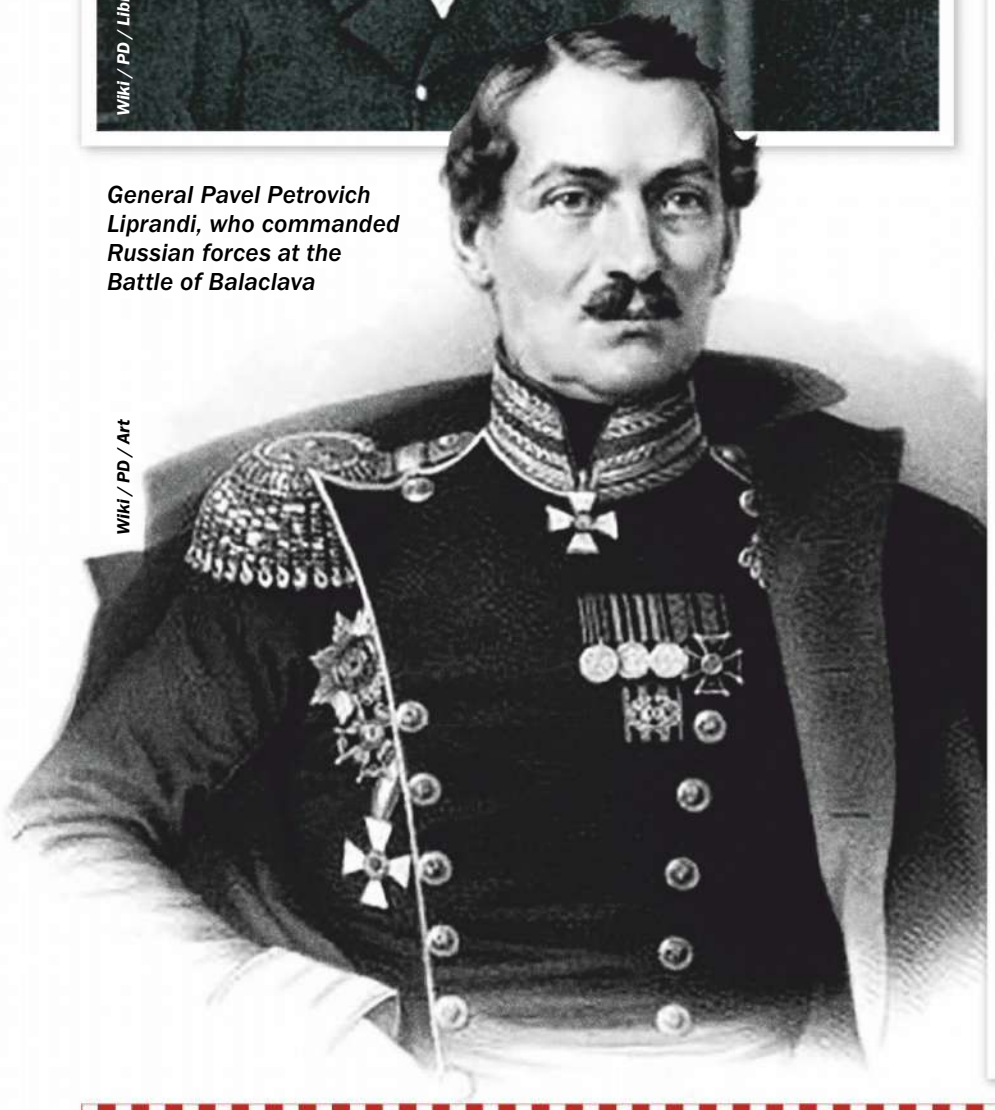
Captain John Alexander Ewart of the 93rd recalled the advance, "Up we all jumped in an instant, and Guards and Highlanders went at the river … I was soon over … the Russians had now got their eyes upon us, and at once opened fire … One shell knocked over three or four of the light company under Gordon, which was next to my own … A Russian rifle regiment was one of those firing at us, and poor Abercrombie, who was a few paces to my right, was shot through the heart, one of my own sergeants being about the same time shot through the body, and one of my corporals, a fine young lad, in the stomach. The whistling of the balls was something wonderful; one broke the scabbard of my claymore; and MacGowan, who commanded the company on my right, got a ball through his kilt … on we dashed, getting at last a little shelter as we ascended the hill. It was tolerably steep, but we at last reached the summit, and then for the first time got a close look at the Russians, who were in column."

The ensuing clash resulted in the Russians being driven from their positions before commencing a full retreat by 4.00pm, with Menshikov's troops seemingly in utter disarray. A jubilant Raglan rode up the Kourgané, where it is said he was greeted by cheering Highlanders, including those of the 93rd. Nevertheless, the Battle of the Alma did not end without loss for the 93rd, the battalion having suffered one officer and five men killed, and another 30 wounded.



FitzRoy Somerset, 1st Baron Raglan, who commanded British troops in the Crimea until his unexpected death in June 1855

Wiki / PD / Library of Congress



General Pavel Petrovich Liprandi, who commanded Russian forces at the Battle of Balaclava

Wiki / PD / Art

Prince Alexander Sergeevich Menshikov, commander of Russian forces in Crimea until he was replaced in February 1855

Wiki / PD / Hermitage Museum

SIR COLIN CAMPBELL

A veteran of the Napoleonic Wars, Colin Campbell served with distinction in the Crimea and rallied the 93rd at Balaclava

Sir Colin Campbell, Baron Clyde, commanded the Highland Brigade during the Crimean War, which consisted of the 42nd (Royal Highland) Regiment of Foot and 79th (The Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders) Regiment of Foot in addition to the 93rd (Sutherland Highlanders) Regiment of Foot. He would take command of the 93rd at Balaclava on that fateful day in 1854, passing into legend along with the Highlanders themselves. Yet Sir Colin had already had a long and distinguished career before the Crimean War.

The son of a carpenter (he was actually born Colin Macliver but later took his mother's name), Campbell joined the British Army at the age of 15 when he gained a commission as an ensign in the 9th Regiment of Foot in 1808. Unfortunately, he lacked social influence and promotion came slowly. Nevertheless, he saw service the disastrous Walcheren Campaign of 1809 and the Peninsular War under Sir Arthur Wellesley, the future Duke of Wellington. Campbell would also see active service outside of Europe, including North America in the War of 1812, in China during the First Opium War, and in India when he fought the Sikhs during the Second Anglo-Sikh War. After the Crimean War, he would be appointed commander-in-chief in India during the savage mutiny.

Promoted to brigadier-general in February 1854 and major-general in June, Campbell commanded with distinction at the Battles of the Alma, Balaclava, and Inkerman in the Crimea. He showed much concern for the welfare of his soldiers, which later earned him the nickname of 'Old Careful'.

Sir Colin Campbell had a long and distinguished career from the Peninsular War to the Indian Mutiny

Wiki / PD / Library of Congress

Battle of Balaclava

Following the Battle of the Alma, the Allies decided against a major, potentially costly, assault of Sevastopol and instead laid siege to the port city, in what would prove a long drawn out and bloody affair. However, during the siege another battle, probably the most famous of the war, was to take place on 25 October. This was the Battle of Balaclava, which is mostly remembered today for the epic yet disastrous charge of the Light Brigade and the more successful charge of the Heavy Brigade. Yet the battle was also notable for another great act, the stand of the 93rd against Russian cavalry.

On the day of the battle, British forces were deployed on the heights overlooking Balaclava. This position was, as it proved, vulnerable to attack by the Russian army under Menshikov. To defend their position, an outer defensive line of earthworks had been established on the Causeway Heights which was defended by Turkish troops. An inner line was also formed by the Royal Marines and the naval artillery. Further out lay the North Valley, the Fedukhine Heights and the South Valley. Positioned overlooking the latter was the British Cavalry Division, a battery of Royal Artillery, a number of Turkish troops, and the 93rd. Commanding this force was Sir Colin Campbell.

Such an inadequate defence naturally proved tempting to the Russians, and it would not be long before they struck hard. In command of the attacking Russian force was General Pavel Liprandi, who commanded an army of 25,000 infantrymen, 34 squadrons of cavalry and 78 guns. The Russian general planned to commence his attack on British forces at Balaclava at 6.30am with an artillery bombardment. His intention was then to conduct a three-pronged assault on the Causeway Heights. Striking at Balaclava, through which Raglan's army heavily depended on its supplies, would potentially cause much disruption to the British and even cut their line of supplies to British troops in the siege lines outside Sevastopol.

The battle duly began with an artillery duel between the Russian and British guns. The Turkish positions were savagely battered, and it was not be long before the Turks began to falter and disintegrate under the heavy strain of shot and shell. Sensing this, Russian infantry and cavalry rushed forward and quickly overwhelmed the Turks. Almost from the beginning, the battle was going badly for the Allies.

"SUCH AN INADEQUATE DEFENCE NATURALLY PROVED TEMPTING TO THE RUSSIANS, AND IT WOULD NOT BE LONG BEFORE THEY STRUCK HARD"

Raglan was watching the developing action from the Sapouné Heights with some concern, although he was unable to see the whole extent of the Russian threat. Were they conducting an elaborate feint to fool him into withdrawing troops from the siege lines at Sevastopol, after which Russian troops would pour out from the city and attack the Chersonese Uplands, he wondered? Rather reluctantly, Raglan issued orders for both the 1st and 4th Divisions to advance into the South Valley, while the Cavalry Division was instructed to move into the North Valley to offer protection to Campbell's exposed position. Unfortunately, neither the 1st nor 4th Divisions would reach the battlefield until 10.30am, which meant they missed much of the ensuing action.

Six companies of the 93rd found themselves positioned on a knoll (which later became known as 'Sutherland Hillock') above the village of Kadikoi, and they were quickly joined by the battalion's two other companies which had been at Balaclava itself. The around 500 Highlanders were also joined by 40 Guardsmen who had been on detached duty in Balaclava and a hastily assembled group of 100 walking wounded. The latter were under the command of a Colonel Daveney, who had been making for Balaclava from the siege lines and took up positions to the left of the 93rd. In addition to the British troops, it should be remembered that Campbell also had a Turkish infantry battalion under his command and was able to create a

A famous photograph of the scene at Balaclava, captured by Roger Fenton

ORIGINS OF THE 'THIN RED LINE'

This common phrase was first coined by a Victorian journalist

William Howard Russell of *The Times* had a grandstand view of the Battle of Balaclava and the role played by the 93rd. Shortly after the battle, he famously wrote, "The Russians dash at the Highlanders. The ground flies beneath their horses' feet; gathering speed at every stride, they dash on towards that thin red streak topped with a line of steel." However, this 'thin red streak' would not be the phrase that became the stuff of legend. Rather, in his book *The British Expedition To The Crimea* (revised in 1877) the description morphed into, "The Russians drew breath for a moment, and then in one grand line charged towards Balaclava. The ground flew beneath their horses' feet; gathering speed at every stride, they dashed on towards that thin red line tipped with steel." It would be the updated phrase of the 'thin red line' that soon found its way into common usage.

This arguably jingoistic Victorian cliché has survived to this day as a figure of speech to describe how seemingly thinly spread military forces are able hold against a superior attacking force. In more recent years, author James Jones used the phrase as the title of his 1962 novel of the same name, in which Jones draws on his own military service and experiences in the Guadalcanal campaign during World War II. The novel was later made into a movie in 1998, again using the title *The Thin Red Line*. As well as in military usage, the phrase has also been adopted, albeit slightly modified to the 'Thin Blue Line', when describing the work of the police in protecting and serving the general public.

Officers and men of the 93rd (the 'Thin Red Line') at Scutari shortly before they landed in the Crimea

© Alamy

Wiki / PD / Roger Fenton

British survivors of the Charge of the Light Brigade. By Roger Fenton, October 1854

second from scratch when he rallied some of those that had fled the redoubts. One of the Turkish battalions was positioned on the left of the British line while the other was placed on the right. Campbell's force now consisted of around 700 British and 1,000 Turks.

As the Russian cavalry thundered up to the causeway crossroads it appeared that nothing now stood in their way for an advance on Balaclava itself. Russian General Ivan Ryzhov detached four squadrons of his Hussars for an advance towards Kadikoi, although their original intention remains unclear. Unbeknown to the Russian cavalrymen, however, was the fact that there was indeed something in their way. The men of the 93rd had taken cover from the Russian artillery after two of their number had been killed and thus had remained unseen.

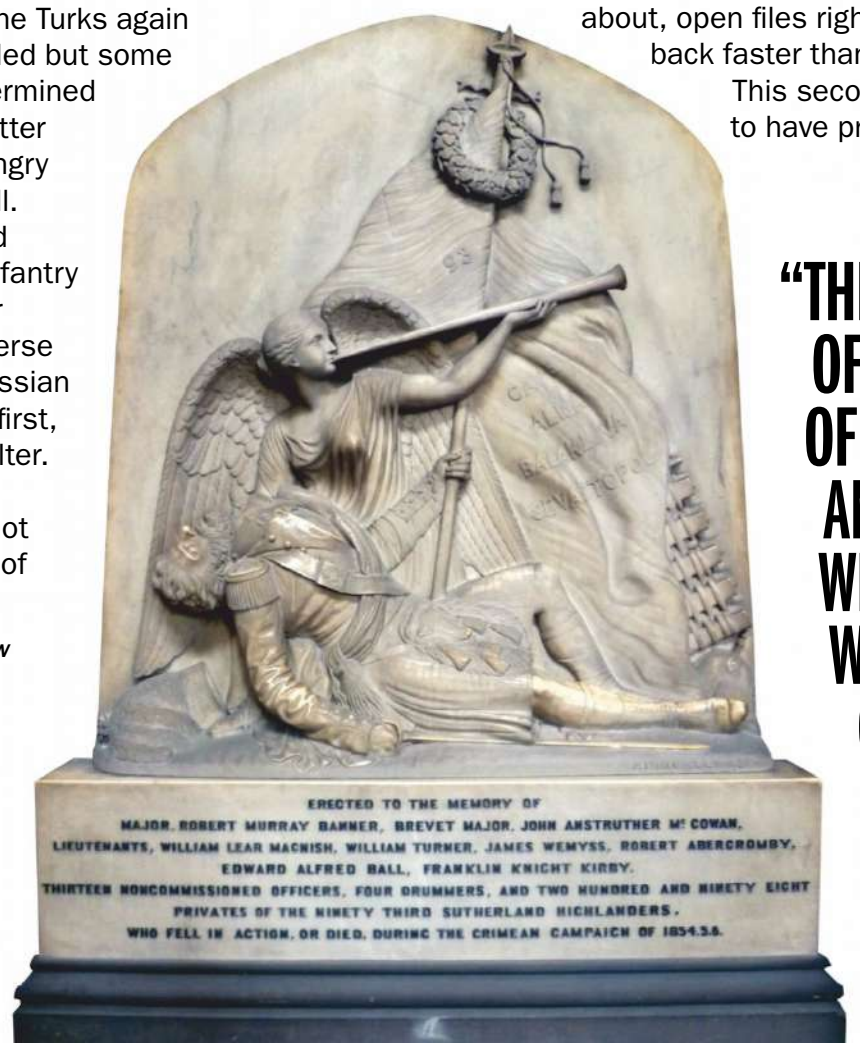
When it became clear the Russian cavalry were heading towards them, Campbell addressed his men, "There is no retreat from here, men. You must die where you stand." To this the men of the 93rd replied, "Aye, Sir Colin. If needs be, we'll do that." As the Russian cavalry reached within 1,000 yards of the village, Campbell ordered the men of the 93rd to stand up, formed in line rather than the more common square formation adopted when facing cavalry. The Turks again wavered, many fled but some of the more determined remained, the latter coerced by an angry looking Campbell.

Seeing the red coated British infantry suddenly appear also had an adverse effect on the Russian cavalry, who, at first, also began to falter. This moment of hesitation was not lost on the men of the 93rd, who then began to surge forward off their vantage point, much to Campbell's disgust and prompting him to shout, "Ninety-third! Ninety-third! Damn all that eagerness!" At that moment, the Highlanders delivered a roaring volley of fire from their Minié rifles towards the Russians. Due to the long range, the fire seemed to have little severe impact on the enemy, although it is almost certain they sustained at least some casualties in the hail of lead.

William Russell of *The Times*, who was watching events unfold from the heights above, later wrote, "The ground flies beneath their horses' feet; gathering speed at every stride, they dash on towards that thin red streak topped with a line of steel … The Russians come within 600 yards, down goes that line of steel in front, and out rings a thundering volley of Minié musketry."

The Russian cavalry now instinctively wheeled left, and Campbell was quick to realise his weak left flank was under immediate threat. A second volley was ordered, and another roaring hot fire ripped into the Russian horses and soldiers. Russell recalled, "Another volley flashed from the levelled fire, and carries death and terror into the Russians. They wheel about, open files right and left, and fly back faster than they came."

This second volley seems to have proved too much for the Russian cavalry, who, unsupported by infantry and artillery, then turned further left again and began to move away from Kadikoi in some disarray. Although the Battle of Balaclava was not yet over, the men of the 93rd, and those who supported them, were victorious on their little part of the battlefield.



Source: Wiki / CC 3.0 / Kim Traynor

Memorial at Glasgow Cathedral to the officers and men of the 93rd Sutherland Highlanders who were killed during the Crimean War

"THE COURAGE OF THE MEN OF THE 93RD AND THOSE WHO STOOD WITH THEM CANNOT BE DISPUTED"

Lionisation

When news of the part played by the 93rd reached Britain, the public quickly began to lionise their heroes in scarlet. The Crimean War was, of course, a conflict which betrayed how ill-prepared and ill-commanded the British Army had become by the 1850s. The public outcry and fierce debates in Parliament of the time are well known. For many, there was a clear and desperate need for something positive regarding the far-off war, and the news of such a seemingly gallant stand was soon pounced on by an excited British press. The qualities of the British soldier were once again proved, even if he had been let down by those in authority above him.

Nevertheless, it remains unclear exactly what the four detached squadrons of Russian cavalry intended. Liprandi had ordered Ryzhov to move "against the enemy camp". However, what did this mean? Some felt they were to capture a British artillery park they believed was situated near Kadikoi, while others thought they were supposed to target the British lines of communication. It is highly unlikely that any direct assault of Balaclava was their intention, for being unsupported by infantry and artillery there was little chance of success, especially for a detachment of a mere 400 horsemen.

In reality, the part played by the 93rd was not one of fierce hand-to-hand combat and it only lasted for a few minutes. It is unlikely they played any decisive role that would have greatly influenced the outcome of the battle, which itself was largely indecisive. Nevertheless, the courage of the men of the 93rd and those who stood with them cannot be disputed and remains entrenched in British military history, Whatever the intentions of the Russian cavalry, they were humiliatingly defeated by an ad-hoc, mixed British force of able bodied and invalids supported by only a handful of Turkish troops and a single field battery.

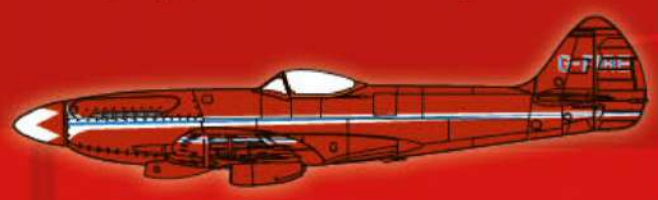
AIRFIX

1:48

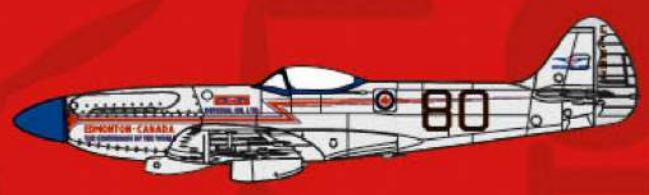
SUPERMARINE SPITFIRE Mk.XIV CIVILIAN SCHEMES

A05139
SUPERMARINE SPITFIRE Mk.XIV CIVILIAN SCHEMES

Possessing grace, beautifully clean lines and lots of power, several Spitfires would survive the war to become highly distinctive aircraft on the civilian aviation scene either operating as Airshow display aircraft, or competing in air race competitions around the world. The aggressive profile of the Spitfire XIV made for a particularly striking air racer and helped to reaffirm the enduring legacy of this famous aeroplane.



SUPERMARINE SPITFIRE FR Mk.XIVG-FIRE, Duxford, Cambridgeshire, England, 1988.



SUPERMARINE SPITFIRE FR Mk.XIV
CF-GMZ, Canada, 1949.

Length 206mm Width 209mm Pieces 118

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RACE TO THE SEA

17 SEPTEMBER – 30 NOVEMBER 1914

A series of attempts to outflank the enemy's forces, the race to the sea set the stage for years of trench warfare

The race to the sea involved unparalleled troop movements and immense loss of life

© Alamy

The term ‘race to the sea’ during the opening months of World War I is something of a misnomer. Rather than a race, the series of movements by the opposing German and Allied armies involved attempts by each side to turn the northern flank of its enemy. Following the opening Battle of the Frontiers in August and September 1914, the German offensive into France was stopped during desperate fighting at the First Battle of the Marne from 5-12 September and during the British-French counteroffensive that resulted in the Battle of the Aisne through the end of the month.

Four weeks of northward manoeuvres continued, leading to a series of encounter battles that ended in late-October with the two sides still opposing one another, although their disputed northern flanks were anchored on the coast of the North Sea. After the German defeat at the Marne, General Erich von Falkenhayn ordered much of his command to dig in along the Aisne to protect his right flank, while additional troops were moved west in preparation for a renewed offensive to turn the French left. This plan was discarded in favour of a general offensive with three armies attacking to the south, while a fourth executed a westward march to hit the enemy flank.

“EMPHASIS ON MOVING TO THE WEST AND NORTH INTENSIFIED, RESULTING IN THE “RACE” AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRENCH WARFARE”

French attacks beginning on 18 September disrupted the German offensive, and Field Marshal Joseph Joffre altered his initial plan for a counteroffensive when the Germans were discovered defending the line along the Aisne. Joffre stepped up the transfer of troops from east to west, while German attacks in the area made some headway and created the long-standing St Mihiel Salient in the French line around Verdun. Both sides planned attacks that were either turned back or thwarted by enemy movements. Emphasis on moving to the west and north intensified, resulting in the ‘race’ and the development of trench warfare the following winter.

THE BATTLE OF PICARDY

22-26 SEPTEMBER 1914

The inconclusive Battle of Picardy was fought in the context of the larger Battle of the Aisne amid reciprocal flanking manoeuvres

General Erich von Falkenhayn led the German armies during the Battle of Picardy in 1914

1. FRENCH MARCH HALTED

French Marshal Joseph Joffre orders the 6th Army to advance along the Oise River but news that two German corps have marched south from the Belgian port city of Antwerp halts the march and requires the French to dig in around the villages of Roye and Nampcel. French reinforcements pour into the area.

2. THE GERMAN RESPONSE

By 22 August, the German II Corps transfers from the Aisne front as garrison troops are sufficient to hold that line. These troops support the IX Reserve Corps along with further reinforcements. The French encounter the enemy line during a thrust from Lassigny to Chaulnes and Roye, forcing a German retirement.

3. POSSIBLE COMMUNICATIONS DISRUPTION

Initial French successes threaten German lines of communication through the villages of St Quentin and Ham. In anticipation of this growing concern, the German XVIII Corps has been on the march from Reims toward Ham, a distance of 80km (50mi), since 21 September, arriving on the night of the 23rd.

4. FRESH CORPS ATTACK

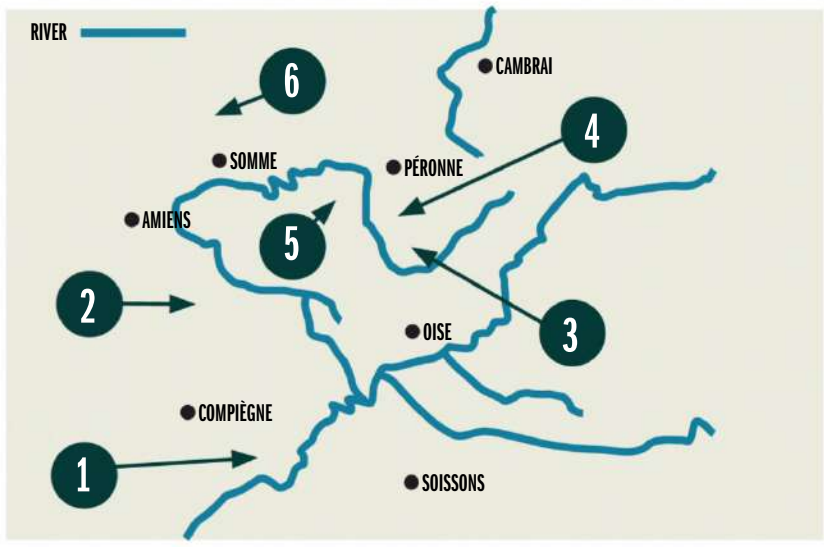
The German XVIII Corps attacks the advancing French, pressing the enemy IV Corps back toward Roye along its right flank. North of the engagement, elements of the French 2nd Army cross the Somme River and establish a lodgment on the east bank; however, the effort exhausts the army's offensive capacity.

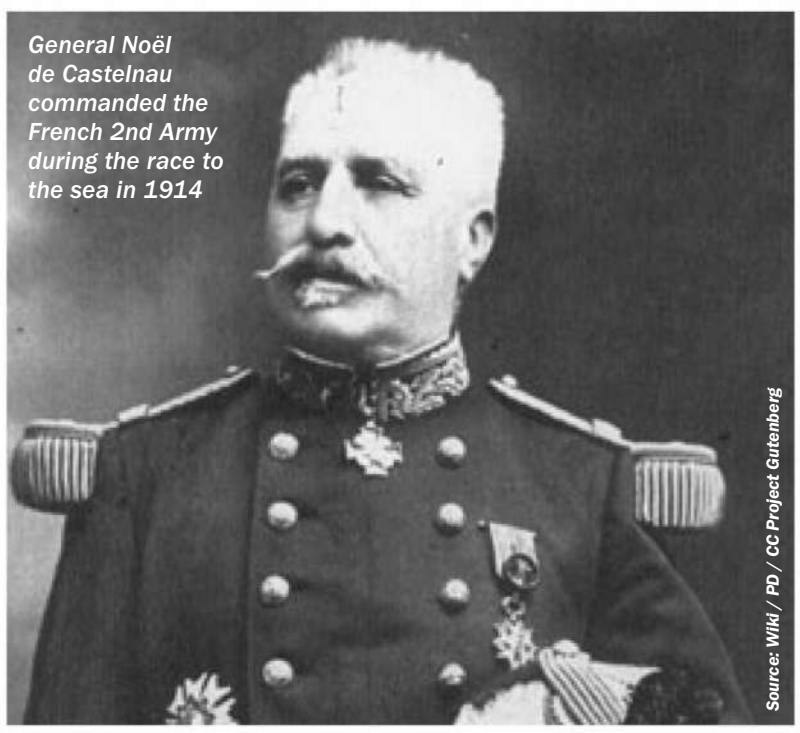
5. GERMAN COUNTERSTROKE

The German XIV Corps reaches Bapaume to the north, while the XXI and I Bavarian Corps recapture the town of Péronne and force the French to retreat west of the Somme, where they dig in along good defensive terrain. Further German attacks around Noyon push the 2nd Army back further.

6. LOOK TO THE NORTH

French counterattacks lead to a larger action along the expanse of the Western Front from 25-27 September and produce limited results as the 2nd Army moves further north toward Arras during a week of manoeuvres. General Erich von Falkenhayn orders German forces to concentrate further north in the direction of Amiens.





General Noël de Castelnau commanded the French 2nd Army during the race to the sea in 1914

THE BATTLE OF ALBERT

25-29 SEPTEMBER 1914

Simultaneous movements to outflank the enemy led to a clash between French and German forces

1. FRENCH RENEWAL

Reinforced after its fight to the south, the French 2nd Army under General Noël de Castelnau advances eastward on 25 September toward the German northern flank, which is expected to be vulnerable. Instead, they run into the German 6th Army, which General Erich von Falkenhayn has already ordered forward in a similar movement.

2. FALKENHAYN'S MOVE FORWARD

By 26 September, the Germans have advanced to Bapaume, and the following day they reach Thiepval. Their cavalry moves north the next day as the II Bavarian Corps takes ground north of the Somme River. The II Cavalry Corps forces two French divisions, the 61st and 62nd Reserve, to give ground.

3. THE TABLES TURNED

While the Germans prepare for an attack on Albert to the southwest, French General Louis de Maud'huy gathers his forces of the Subdivision d'Armée at Arras, but discovers that the German offensive has imperilled his own dispositions. The Germans have pushed back a French division at Bapaume and started moving toward Bray-sur-Somme and Albert.

4. TOWARD THE SEA

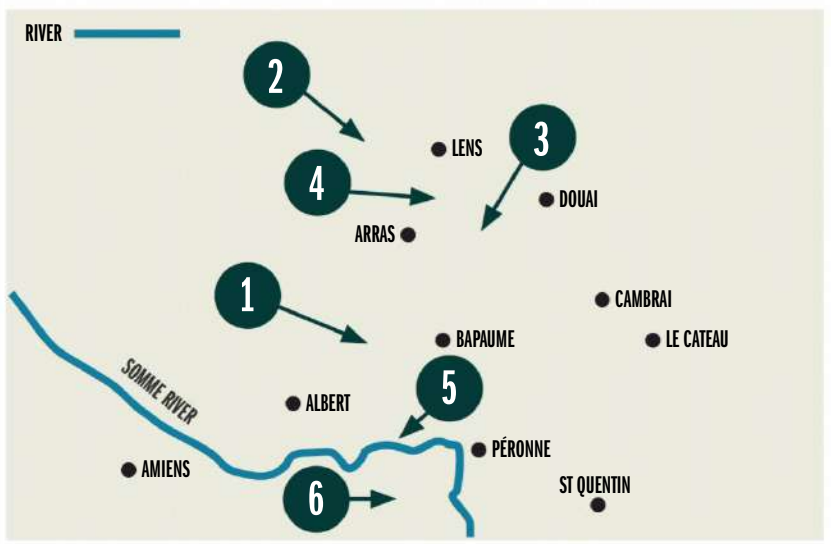
As the Germans drive down the valley of the Somme River toward the sea, four French territorial divisions and four cavalry divisions defend the approaches toward Albert, stopping the Germans along a line from Thiepval to Maricourt, while the vanguard of the German II Cavalry Corps moves north close to Arras before French cavalry intervene.

5. FRICOURT AND FRENCH RESISTANCE

On 29 September, the German 28th Reserve Division captures Fricourt, but French artillery and machine-gun fire from beyond the village limit further advances there, as well as on the road north along the 26th Reserve Division line of advance. French counterattacks shut down the German initiative but fail to retake Fricourt.

6. ATTACK AND DEFEND

Fighting peters out overnight but resumes with sunrise, and the Germans are stopped at Maricourt just south of Fricourt as their counter-attack thwarts an enemy attempt to capture high ground at Bazentin Ridge. The French, in turn, are halted as German troops arrive from Bapaume. They reinforce and plan another flanking movement.



German soldiers guard a portion of a trenchline near Arras after hard fighting during the autumn of 1914

THE BATTLE OF ARRAS

1-4 OCTOBER 1914

The French attempt another flanking movement but German advances place them squarely on the defensive around the town

1. JOFFRE DEFENDS TEMPORARILY

After beating back a German attack on the Cojeul River and high ground around Monchy-le-Preux, French forces around Arras are reinforced, and the 2nd Army is placed in a defensive posture. The detached Subdivision d'Armée attacks southeast of Arras but runs into three German corps planning to attack. The ensuing German envelopment stalls.

2. JOFFRE'S PLAN FORESTALLED

German attacks resume on 2 October, and French divisions transferred from the Vosges front are hastily deployed to meet the threat. The opposing forces move south and westward, and fighting rages around the village of Izel, which falls along with other towns in the area by dawn the following morning.

3. CONTINUING GERMAN ASSAULTS

From a line extending from Drocourt to Bois-Bernard and Fresnoy the Germans attack toward Neuvireul, but French artillery fire and infantry support from Acheville stops the drive. Three German divisions move up the valley of the Scarpe River to attack the outskirts of Arras at St Laurent. Mericourt and Acheville are occupied.

4. FRENCH DEFENSIVE FORTITUDE

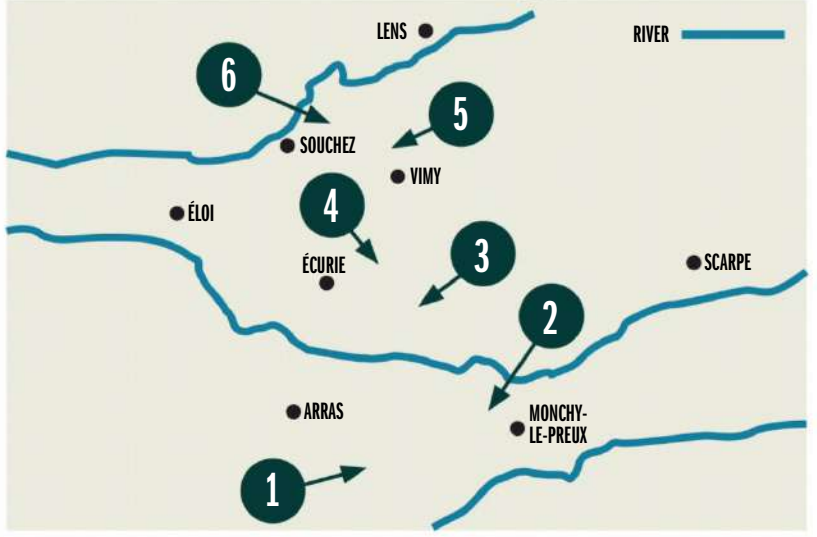
The French stand fast outside Arras, forcing the Germans back and to the north. Further German attacks in the vicinity fail to gain headway. Difficult terrain and French counterattacks create some disorder among the Germans, but the French recover little territory as elements of their command lose contact with each other.

5. STAND AND FIGHT

Joffre rejects Castelnau's request for a withdrawal, counting on reinforcements to the north to divert German attention. Meanwhile, German attacks west of Avion are stymied by artillery fire from Lens and Givenchy but high ground near Souchez is captured. The Germans enter Lens and Souchez while capturing a portion of Vimy Ridge.

6. STABILISING THE LINE

Utilising rail transportation to efficiently respond to the aggressive German offensive moves, the French seek to minimise their own casualties and buy time to retake the initiative. German attempts to encircle Arras with repeated assaults from the north ultimately prove unsuccessful, and the fighting again moves northward toward the coast of the North Sea.



THE BATTLE OF LA BASSÉE

10 OCTOBER – 2 NOVEMBER 1914

Swift German movement seizes Lille, but the British recover quickly and minimise further gains during three weeks of fighting

1. CAPTURE OF LILLE

In early-October the Germans occupy the city of Lille just ahead of the British and turn to attack the exposed British flank near the town of Ypres. The British II Corps reaches Abbeville by rail on 9 October and advances toward Bethune and occupies a line stretching both left and right of the village.

2. ACROSS THE CANAL

On 12 October, the British attack north of La Bassée Canal, advancing to Givenchy and Pont du Hem despite the best efforts of the German I and II Cavalry Corps and attacking infantry to slow them down. Preparations are quickly made for a resumption of the advance.

3. EASTWARD ALONG THE WATERWAY

After repulsing a German counter-attack at Givenchy, the British II Corps turns eastward. While following the course of La Bassée Canal, the British take heavy casualties, losing nearly 1,000 men. In exchange, they make little headway along the flanks. French cavalry support is ineffective in establishing the advance's forward momentum.

4. EXECUTING THE PIVOT

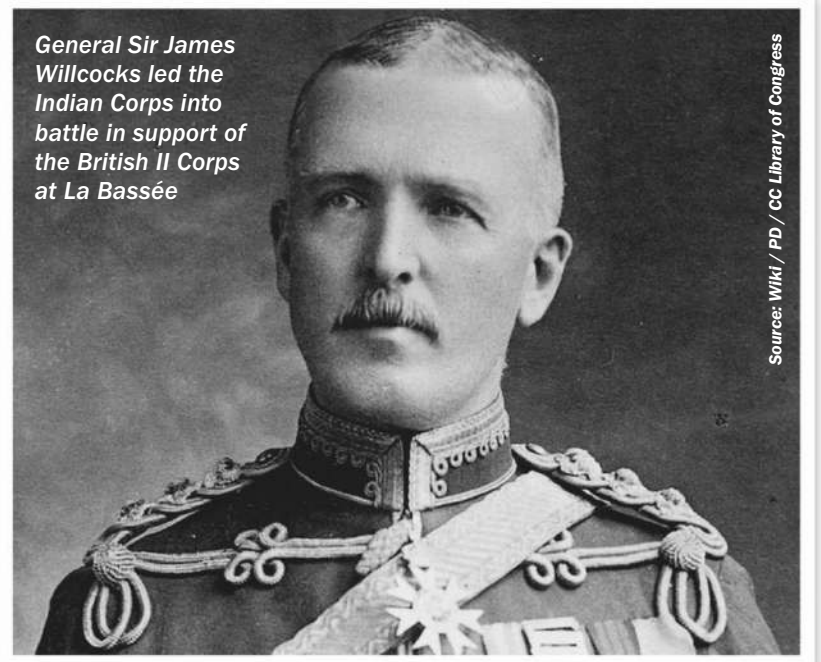
The British II Corps pivots on its axis near La Bassée Canal, engaging its left in an advance to Aubers. Stubborn German resistance contests the line of march. However, the British establish a lodgment on Aubers Ridge while French cavalry ride into Fromelles. On 18 October, German reinforcements arrive and manage to halt the British advance.

5. ALLIED PROBES REBUFFED

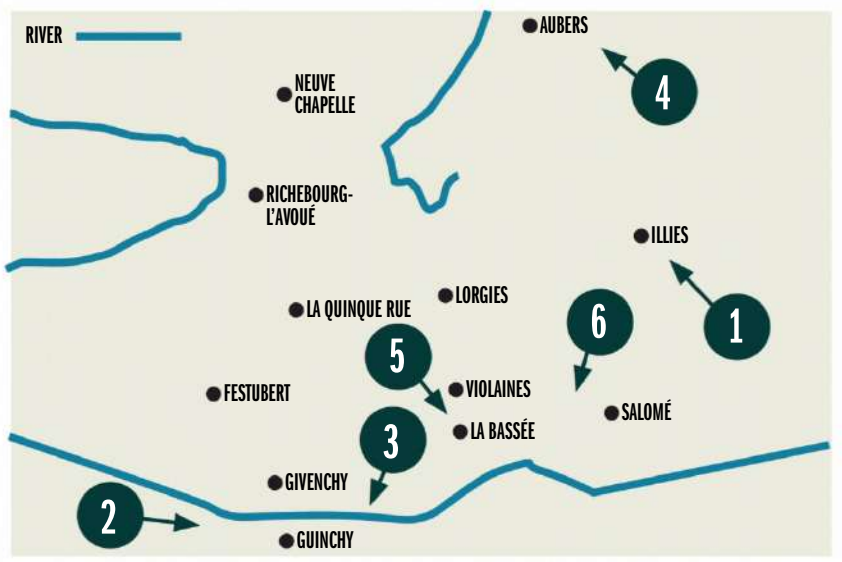
On 21 October, British and French troops enter the village of Le Pilly, but are soon ejected as German reinforcements arrive. Within two days, the British are ordered to dig in and hold the ground around Givenchy, Illies, Herlies, and Riez to the south, while operations continue in the north toward Aubers.

6. HOLDING THEIR GAINS

The entrenched British II Corps is reinforced by the Lahore Division of the Indian Corps and fends off repeated German counterattacks, holding onto its hard won territorial gains until early November. Both sides begin to refocus toward a major battle around the city of Ypres.



General Sir James Willcocks led the Indian Corps into battle in support of the British II Corps at La Bassée



Source: Wiki / PD / CC The Baloch Regimental Centre, Abbottabad

Soldiers of the 129th Baluchis, troops of the British Indian Army, march toward the front during the Battle of Messines in 1914

THE BATTLE OF MESSINES

12 OCTOBER – 2 NOVEMBER 1914

The British III Corps joined the race to the sea and advanced between the Douves River and the Comines-Ypres Canal

1. ARRIVE OF III CORPS

As the British III Corps comes together at St Omer and Hazebrouck on 10-12 October, its cavalry probes eastward toward the German-occupied city of Lille and extends northward toward Ypres. German forces are dug in on Mont des Cats, and the British 3rd Cavalry Brigade attacks these positions while occupying Mount Noir north of the town of Bailleul.

2. RESUMPTION OF THE RIDE

The British cavalry takes up the advance again on 14 October, riding northeastward to capture the villages of Dranoutre and Kemmel against only token resistance from the Germans. The 3rd Cavalry Brigade links up with the 3rd Cavalry Division of IV Corps near Wytschaete.

3. FRENCH CAVALRY FORWARD

French horsemen take the town of Estaires on 15 October, but immediately run into German resistance preventing an advance eastward to Comines. However, Allied forces enter Warneton, consequently driving the Germans to the far side of the Comines-Ypres Canal, gaining the upper hand. The following day, the Allied hold on the upper Lys River is solidified.

4. BEF ADVANCE

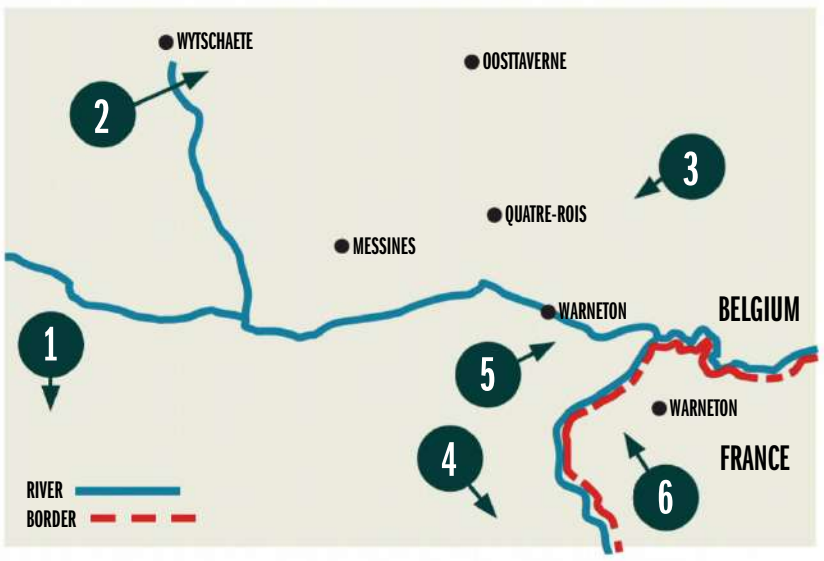
On October 16, the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) is ordered forward along a wide front. Taking advantage of the ongoing German retreat, the cavalry are ordered across the Lys River as the III Corps pushes north to make contact with the 7th Division in the vicinity of Ypres. The Allied positions are further solidified.

5. A RIVER ASSAULT

The Lys River near Warneton is 14-18m (45-60ft) wide and up to 1.5m (5ft) deep, making it difficult and treacherous to cross. Dismounted cavalry attacks fail to dislodge the German defences along the waterway, and as a result, the Allied cavalry in Warneton pull out of the town during the night of 17 October.

6. THE RIVER LINE HOLDS

Cavalry attacks against the Germans along the Lys River resume on the morning of October 18, but little progress is made against the strong German defensive position. From Deulemont north to the rail centre of Tenbrielen, the Germans hold firm, and the major actions of the Battle of Messines eventually come to a close without a definitive result.



THE BATTLE OF ARMENTIÈRES

13 OCTOBER – 2 NOVEMBER 1914

British forces established a continuous Allied line to the North Sea during the prelude to the Battle of Ypres

1. TWO BRITISH CORPS IN CONCERT

In mid-October, the British III Corps advances toward Bailleul and Armentières near the left flank of II Corps, marching toward Lille. Supported by the Cavalry Corps, III Corps is to reach the Armentieres-Wytschaete line, advancing as far as Ypres. Proposed relief of II Corps by French forces linking with III Corps fails to materialise, endangering their advance.

2. GERMANS DEFEND HIGH GROUND

Three divisions of the German IV Cavalry Corps occupy high ground from Mont Kemmel to Mont des Cats, blocking the British line of advance. Undeterred, the British Cavalry Corps takes Mont des Cats on 12 October and continue to move forward over the next day.

3. FIGHT AT LA COURONNE

On 13 October, the III Corps encounters German troops in strong defensive positions at Meteren Becque and launch an attack stretching from La Couronne to Fontaine Houck in bad weather that afternoon. Despite suffering heavy casualties, the British manage to capture Meteren and Outtersteene as the German defenders withdraw from the area.

4. TO THE SEA

Bad weather delays follow-up III Corps attacks, but forward movement reveals the Germans have abandoned Bailleul altogether and retired to the east bank of the notoriously difficult-to-cross Lys River. Meanwhile, the Allies establish a continuous line to the North Sea. The III Corps links up with British cavalry at Romarin.

5. ACROSS THE LYS

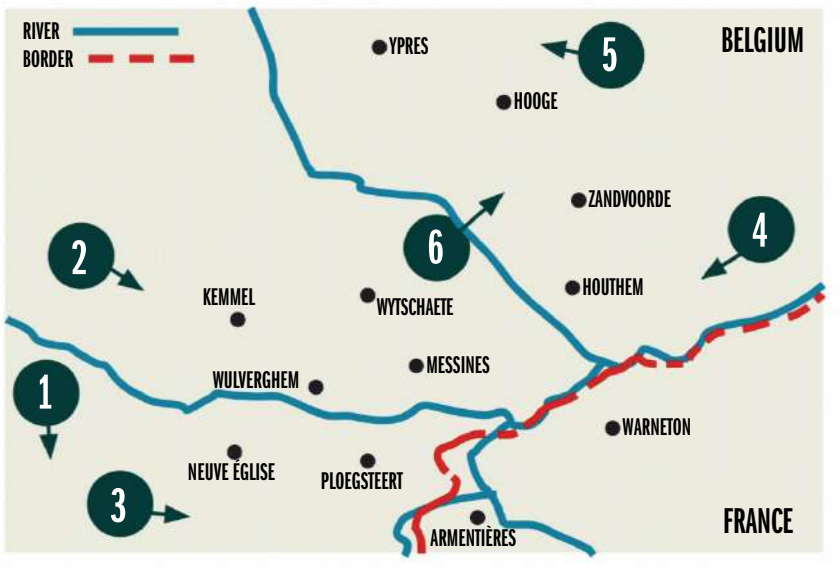
On 16 October, British troops cross the Lys River while German counterattacks begin in the vicinity of Dixmude. The British occupy Armentières, and two days later, the III Corps is ordered to attack down the valley of the Lys during the major French and British Expeditionary Force offensive.

6. DIGGING IN

The Allied offensive makes gradual but steady headway until substantial German entrenchments are encountered beyond Perenchies Ridge. Allied infantry is ordered to dig in on the night of 18 October, while the III Corps occupies the line west of Lille. A stalemate is reached, one that will eventually lead to unspeakable loss of life.

© Alamy

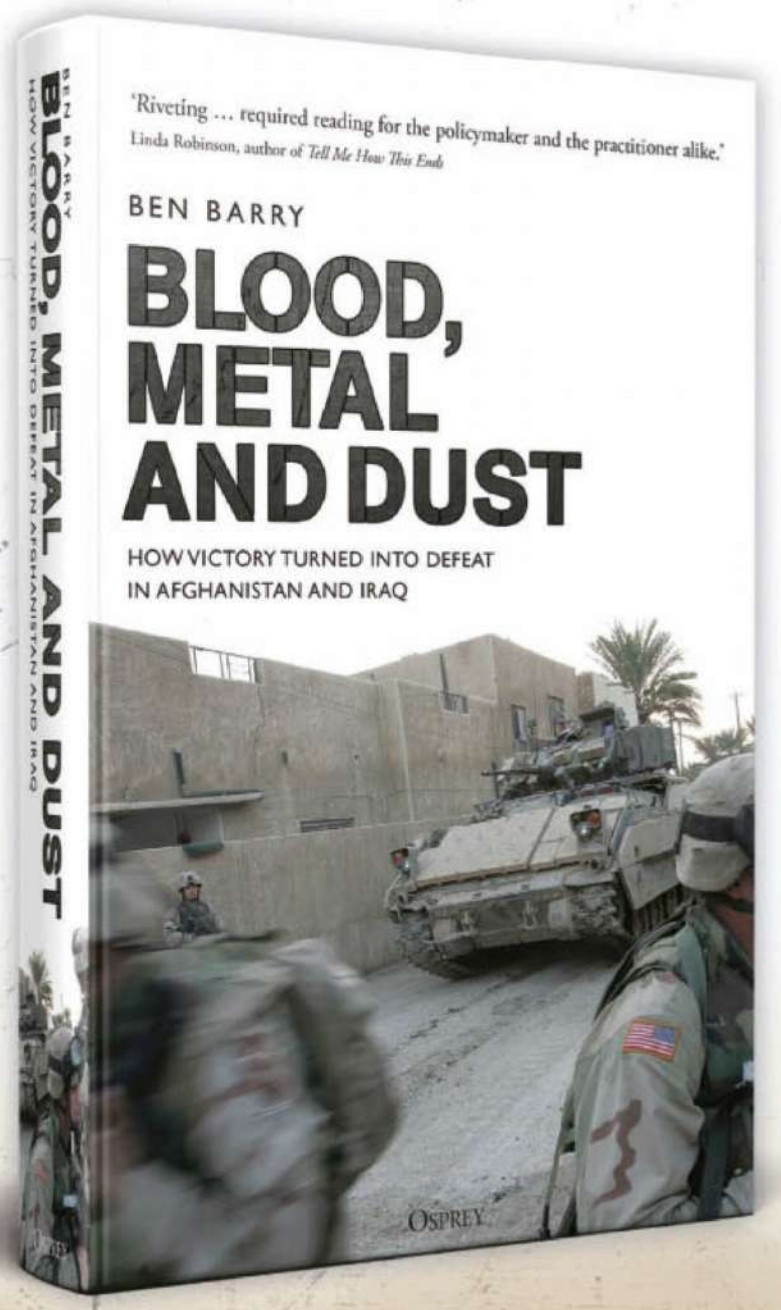
A French artillery crew services a 75mm field gun during the Battle of Armentières and the race to the sea



'With a soldier's eye for telling operational details, Ben Barry offers an authoritative, compelling and inevitably bleak account of the American and British campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan.'

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN

EMERITUS PROFESSOR OF WAR STUDIES, KING'S COLLEGE LONDON



BLOOD, METAL AND DUST

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SILESIA, POLAND 5 DECEMBER 1757

Great Battles

BATTLE OF LEUTHEN

WORDS WILLIAM E. WELSH

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The Imperial Regiment Rot-Wurzburg fiercely defends the walls of the Catholic Church in Leuthen

Prussian King Frederick II 'The Great' used his military strategies to ensure Prussia's control of Silesia during the Third Silesian War

The blue-coated Prussian soldiers marched south over hard frozen ground blanketed with a light dusting of snow towards the nondescript village of Sagschutz at midday, on 5 September, 1757. A string of low hills masked their march from the watchful eyes of their Austrian foe arrayed for battle less than two miles to the west.

Prussian King Frederick II 'The Great' believed his army had a strong chance for success in the coming battle that would decide whether Prussia retained Silesia or lost it to the Austrians. He intended to send his well-trained infantry against the Austrian flank in what was known in military lexicon as an 'oblique order of attack.' Simply put, the Prussians would advance diagonally against the southern end of the Austrian line.

When Frederick had completed making his final adjustments for attack at 1.15pm, he rode over to two corporals who would carry the colours into battle for the first battalion of the 26th Infantry Regiment. Frederick wanted to make sure they knew exactly where to lead their battalion. The 45-year-old Prussian king told them to march straight towards the enemy whose troops were on a low rise a short distance to the northeast. It was imperative that the three battalions spearheading the attack drive the enemy from its position at all costs, he told them.

OPPOSING FORCES

PRUSSIANS

LEADER
Frederick the Great

INFANTRY
29,900

CAVALRY
9,800

GUNS
170

VS

AUSTRIANS

LEADER
Charles of Lorraine

INFANTRY
41,000

CAVALRY
22,000

GUNS
210

"IT'S A CASE OF DO OR DIE! YOU'VE GOT THE ENEMY IN FRONT, AND ALL OUR ARMY BEHIND. THERE IS NO SPACE TO RETREAT, AND THE ONLY WAY TO GO FORWARD IS TO BEAT THE ENEMY!"

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Blue-coated Prussian soldiers

Source: Wiki / PD / Bamberg State Library

"It's a case of do or die!" he said. "You've got the enemy in front, and all our army behind. There is no space to retreat, and the only way to go forward is to beat the enemy!"

When Great Britain and France went to war again in May 1756, the major powers in Europe quickly took sides. Austria, Russia, Sweden and Saxony sided with France, while Prussia and Hanover sided with Great Britain. Austrian Empress Maria Theresa had a score to settle with Prussia. Frederick had taken the wealthy province of Silesia from Austria during the so-called Silesian Wars of the 1740s. He did so in order to improve the economy of his largely agrarian realm, which lacked minerals and industry. The empress desperately wanted Silesia back.

Frederick invaded Saxony on 29 August 1756 to secure the region for his forces and deny it to the Austrians. After a six-week campaign, the Saxons surrendered. The Austrian-led Holy Roman Empire declared war on Prussia on 17 January 1757.

Frederick followed up his Saxony campaign by invading the Austrian province of Bohemia adjacent to Saxony on the south. Although he defeated an Austrian army led by Prince Charles of Lorraine, the empress' brother-in-law, at Prague on 6 May, Austrian Marshal Leopold von Daun handed Frederick his first defeat at Kolin on 18 June.

Frederick then turned his attention to a Franco-Imperial army approaching from the west. Leaving Prussian Lt Gen Augustus William, Duke of Brunswick-Bevern, in Silesia with 41,000 troops to defend the province against the Austrians, Frederick marched east to engage the Franco-Imperial army. He soundly defeated French and Imperial forces on 5 November at Rossbach in Saxony.

"FREDERICK KNEW THAT THE AUSTRIANS WERE RAMPAGING THROUGH CENTRAL SILESIA, BUT HE WAS UNABLE TO REACH BRESLAU IN TIME TO STAVE OFF DISASTER"

The Austrians moved quickly against Bevern while Frederick was addressing the threat posed by the Franco-Imperial army. Lorraine and Daun defeated and captured Bevern on 22 November on the outskirts of Breslau. Frederick knew that the Austrians were rampaging through central Silesia, but he was unable to reach Breslau in time to stave off disaster. Three days later Breslau fell to the Austrians.

The Prussian king was seeking revenge for the defeat of his troops at Breslau. After assimilating the remnants of Bevern's army with his own at the Silesian town of Parchwitz 30 miles north of Breslau, Frederick marched against the Austrians on 4 December. The Austrians deployed for battle the following day in a five-mile line just west of Breslau. The Austrian line stretched from Nippern in the north to Sagschutz in the south. The villages of Frobelwitz and Leuthen fell within the Austrian line.

Frederick was with the Prussian advance guard when it collided with an Austrian cavalry screen outside Borne early on 5 December. The Prussians won the clash, and they captured 600 Saxon Chevaulegers fighting with the Austrians. The Prussians had so intimidated the Austrian light horse that it would not interfere with the Prussian deployment at midday. In this way, Frederick deprived Lorraine and Daun of their reconnaissance arm when they most needed it. As the morning dragged on, Lorraine and Daun, who had their command

Frederick 'the Great' at Lissa by Adolph Menzel

Source: Wiki / PD - Art

post at a cluster of hilltop windmills just north of Leuthen, had no idea where Frederick was or even if he was going to attack them that day.

Frederick surveyed the Austrian battle lines at mid-morning from the Schonberg a mile and a half from the Austrian position. He quickly determined that his best opportunity for success lay in attacking the Austrian left flank. Frederick set off at 11.00am at the head of his army on a three-mile flank march to Sagschutz.

While Frederick was leading the bulk of his army south to assail the Austrian flank near Sagschutz, Austrian right wing commander Lt Gen Giuseppe Lucchese sent urgent requests to Lorraine at noon demanding reinforcements against an imminent Prussian attack. Without making a personal assessment of the situation, Lorraine ordered Lt Gen Karl Leopold von Arenberg to reinforce the right wing with his reserve infantry corps. Committing his reserve in such a manner defied military norm.

Shortly afterwards Lorraine received another urgent request for more reinforcements. This one came from Lt Gen Franz Leopold von Nadasdy, the Hungarian commander of the Austrian left wing. He insisted that the Prussians were about to attack his troops. For reasons unknown, Lorraine did not even reply to Nadasdy's request.

Nadasdy's flank rested on the low rise known as the Kiefenberg just south of Sagschutz. Facing south on the Kiefenberg were 13 inexperienced battalions of Wurttembergers, who were posted behind abattis. At a right angle to the Wurttembergers facing west were a total of 20 battalions of Bavarians and Austrians.

To carry out his oblique order of attack, Frederick put three infantry battalions in the front as an advance guard. The first line behind them consisted of 20 infantry battalions, and the second line was composed of 11 more infantry battalions. Frederick directed his subordinates that each battalion was to follow at 50 paces behind the battalion to its right. The echeloned formation meant that the units would strike the enemy line with a series of successive blows over a 15-minute period. Maj Gen Karl von Wedel's three veteran battalions, one from the 13th regiment and two from the 26th regiment, constituted the advance guard.

Stationed to the right of the main battle line were six battalions whose sole purpose was

5 DECEMBER 1757

How the Prussians defeated the much larger Austrian force

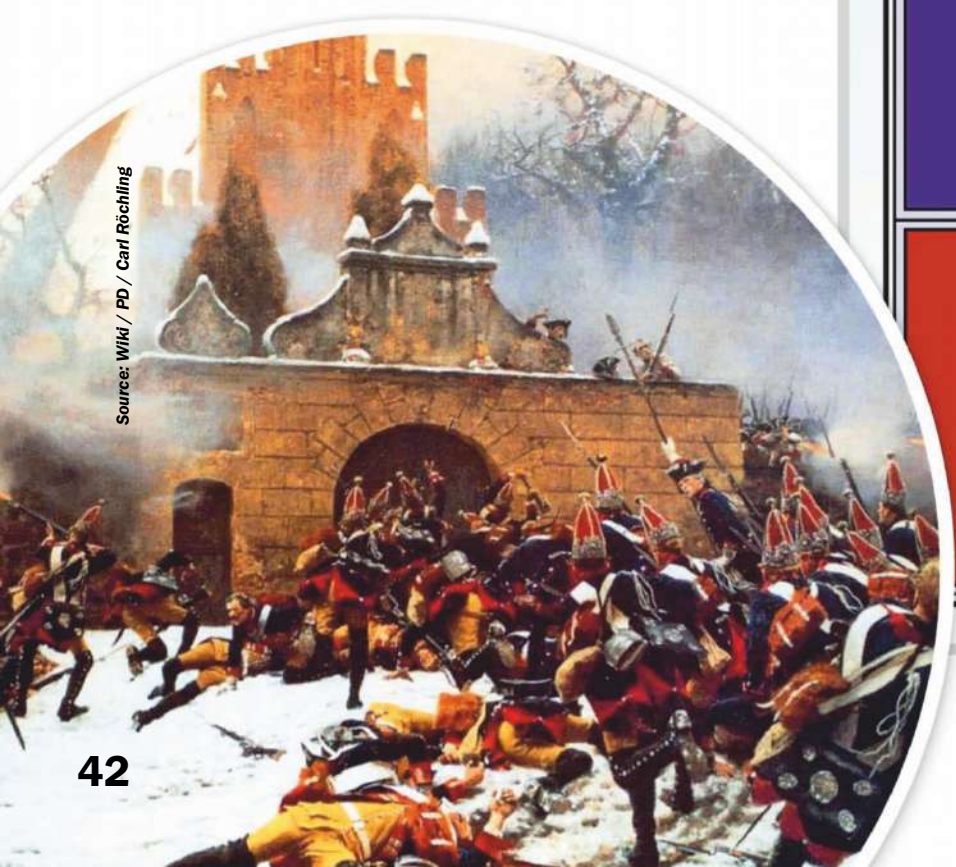
01 SUCCESSFUL FEINT
To deceive the Austrians into believing that he intended to attack their centre, Frederick ordered his light cavalry to form into a line of battle in the late morning east of the village of Borne. He then had the main body of the army begin its flank march by passing through this sector in full view of the enemy. Some of these troops stayed behind temporarily before rejoining the main army further south.

02 PRUSSIANS OVERRUN AUSTRIAN FLANK
An advance guard of three elite Prussian infantry battalions lead King Frederick's 'oblique order' assault at 1.30pm against the Austrian left flank held by Austrian and Imperial troops. The Prussians storm the Kiefenberg where the weak Wurttemberg battalions are deployed behind abattis. The Wurttembergers fire on the Prussians briefly before fleeing their positions. Their flight exposes the flank of other battalions which soon join the flight.

03 PRUSSIAN STORM OF IRON
Prussian 12-pounder long-range guns and howitzers fire round shot and canister at the enemy from high ground south of Leuthen. Frederick issues orders for the batteries to keep pace with the advancing infantry in order to furnish close fire support. The massed artillery moves as many as four times during the battle.

04 SABRE FIGHT
The cavalry posted on the Austrian left wing counter-attacks the Prussian infantry. Before they can inflict casualties on the Prussian foot soldiers, Prussian cuirassiers and dragoons posted on the far right intercept them. A series of mounted melees unfolds over the next hour on the low-lying ground south of Leuthen.

The Battle of Leuthen as depicted by Carl Röchling



Source: Wiki / PD / Carl Röchling

10 HEROIC REARGUARD ACTION
Several squadrons of Austrian cavalry and a handful of infantry regiments conduct a fighting retreat that keeps the Prussian cavalry from cutting off the Austrian army's escape.

09 AUSTRIAN LINE DISSOLVES
The swirling cavalry melee in the late afternoon disrupts the right flank of the Austrian infantry line. Many of the Austrian musketeers cast aside their weapons and flee for their lives. Prussian cuirassiers run down many of them.

08 MOUNTED MELEE
Sixty-five squadrons of cavalry posted on the Austrian right wing charge the Prussian left flank at 4.30pm, but their advance is disrupted by 55 squadrons of cavalry from the Prussian left wing cavalry. Some of the Austrian horsemen fight with great determination, but others ride away believing the day is lost.

05 AUSTRIANS REFORM AT LEUTHEN
Austrian senior commanders realise that the Prussian main attack is coming from the south. They issue orders for the infantry and cavalry posted to the north to march immediately to Leuthen to establish a new defensive line facing south. Some Austrian infantrymen have to march three miles to reach Leuthen. Because the new line is only two miles long, the Austrians are crowded together.

06 SPIRITED DEFENCE OF THE CHURCHYARD
The musketeers of the Rot-Wurzburg battalion man the walls and turrets of the Catholic Church in Leuthen. Six Prussian battalions are committed to the assault on the fortified church. The Austrians repeatedly hurl back the attackers, but the elite Prussian guards eventually fight their way into the churchyard. Some of the Prussian guards fight their way through a side gate, while others storm through a breach in the walls made by the Prussian artillery.

07 DEFENCE OF THE SUNKEN ROAD
The Austrian infantry that survive the street fighting in Leuthen withdraw after an hour-long battle to a sunken road on the north side of Leuthen. When Prussian musketeers attempt to push north from the town, they are greeted by heavy volleys of musketry. In addition, Austrian guns on the high ground near the windmills north of Leuthen shell the Prussians, producing heavy casualties. The Prussians await artillery support and reinforcements before they can resume their advance.

Source: Wiki / PD - Art

Source: Wiki / PD / Fritz Roeber

Source: Wiki / PD / Sanssouci Palace, Prussian Palaces and Gardens Foundation Berlin-Brandenburg

Left: *Prussian infantry advance at Leuthen*

Bottom left: *The Ruhmeshalle (hall of fame) in Berlin, wall painting by Fritz Roeber*

to protect the Prussian right flank. The flank was further protected by Lt Gen Hans Joachim von Zieten's 53 squadrons of cavalry. On the opposite end of the line, Lt Gen Georg Wilhelm von Driesen had 55 squadrons. His troops were hidden behind the Sophienberg.

The three veteran regiments that led the Prussian main attack began their advance at 1.00pm. As the Prussian infantrymen swept forward, the Austrian gunners went into action. Shells ripped gaping holes in the Prussian lines, but the Prussian troops did not waver.

Frederick had ordered his artillery corps to bring along ten 12-pounder siege guns from the fortress of Glogau. These thick-barrelled fortress guns, known as 'brummers,' were brought along to make up a deficiency that Frederick's army had in long-range artillery. He ordered the crews manning the brummers to go into action on the Glanzberg to support the attack. Prussian shells slammed into the German musketeers on the Kirchberg, shattering torsos and severing limbs.

Unable to withstand the storm of iron, the German and Austrian infantry fled towards Leuthen with the Prussian infantry in pursuit. After just 20 minutes of fighting, the Prussians had overrun the Kiefenberg and driven all of Nadasdy's infantry north towards Leuthen. In an attempt to stave off disaster, Nadasty ordered his cavalry to charge the right flank of the Prussian line; however, Zieten's troops disrupted and defeated the charge.

A lull occurred at mid-afternoon as Lorraine and Daun scrambled to form a new battle line facing south behind Leuthen. Some of the first reinforcements to arrive took up positions in the buildings of Leuthen in an effort to buy time for the rest of the army to redeploy into a new battle line. The struggle for control of the fortress-like churchyard of the Catholic Church became a focal point of the battle for both sides from 3.30pm to 4.30pm. Despite a valiant resistance by the Rot-Wurzburg Battalion, the Prussians ultimately carried the position.

General Lucchese, who was responsible for the right flank of the new line, hurled his 65 fresh cavalry squadrons against the Prussian left flank at 4.30pm in an attempt to drive the Prussians back. As the Austrian white-jacketed cuirassiers with their black metal breastplates and Austrian dragoons in their red and green coats thundered towards the vulnerable left flank of the Prussian infantry, Prussian left wing cavalry commander Driesen waved his first line into action.

Driesen's first line consisted of ten squadrons of the vaunted Bayreuth Dragoons. Although they intercepted the Austrians, they soon became hard-pressed. Driesen's second line, consisting of cuirassier squadrons, rode to the dragoons' assistance. The cavalry melee tipped in favour of the Prussians when Prince von Wurttemberg added his 30 Prussian hussar squadrons to the fight.

At that point, the Austrian horsemen fled the field, but not before some of them collided with the Austrian infantry, disrupting their formations. In the meantime, Frederick had massed his guns on the Butterberg. The massed artillery shelled the Austrian infantry on the plain north of Leuthen. When the

King Frederick the Great of Prussia and his troops on the night of the victory at Leuthen, by Wilhelm Camphausen

Austrian foot began fleeing the field, Prussian cuirassiers and hussars rode them down.

The Prussians lost 20 per cent of their army at Leuthen, but the Austrians lost over a third of their forces. The Prussians suffered 6,300 casualties, but the costs for the Austrians was significantly higher – around 10,000 men were lost on the battlefield, and 12,000 more were captured. By the end of December, Lorraine had withdrawn his army to Bohemia.

Frederick's twin victories at Rossbach and Leuthen prevented Prussia from being defeated early in the war and also compelled the British to sign a formal alliance with Prussia in January 1758. The hard campaigning had taken its toll on the Prussian war effort, though. Frederick's war chest was depleted and his regiments were severely under strength. British Prime Minister William Pitt assured Frederick that he could expect generous financial aid from the British to purchase equipment and provisions.

Many of Frederick's best soldiers had died on the battlefields of Saxony and Austria. The new recruits would require extensive training if they were to be counted on to carry out Frederick's complex tactics.

"AS THE PRUSSIAN INFANTRYMEN SWEPT FORWARD, THE AUSTRIAN GUNNERS WENT INTO ACTION. SHELLS RIPPED GAPING HOLES IN THE PRUSSIAN LINES, BUT THE PRUSSIAN TROOPS DID NOT WAVER"

Frederick had the audacity to approach Austrian Empress Maria Theresa after his victory at Leuthen with a proposal that they discuss peace terms. But the empress had assurances from the French and Russians that they remained committed to the war against Prussia. Her advisors assured her that as long as the coalition against Prussia remained intact it would ultimately defeat the enemy.

The empress believed that under the proper circumstances Austrian arms could once again vanquish the Prussians on the battlefield. To increase the likelihood of this happening, she made Daun the new Austrian supreme commander.

Frederick contemplated an invasion of Moravia in 1758. Yet before he could pursue operations against the Austrians, he had to confront the Russians who were advancing against him.

In January 1758 the Russian Imperial Army captured Konigsberg in East Prussia. The Prussians and Russians subsequently collided at Zorndorf in Brandenburg in August 1758. The outcome of the battle was inconclusive, but a pattern had emerged. Frederick would have to put out one fire after another as long as the war lasted.

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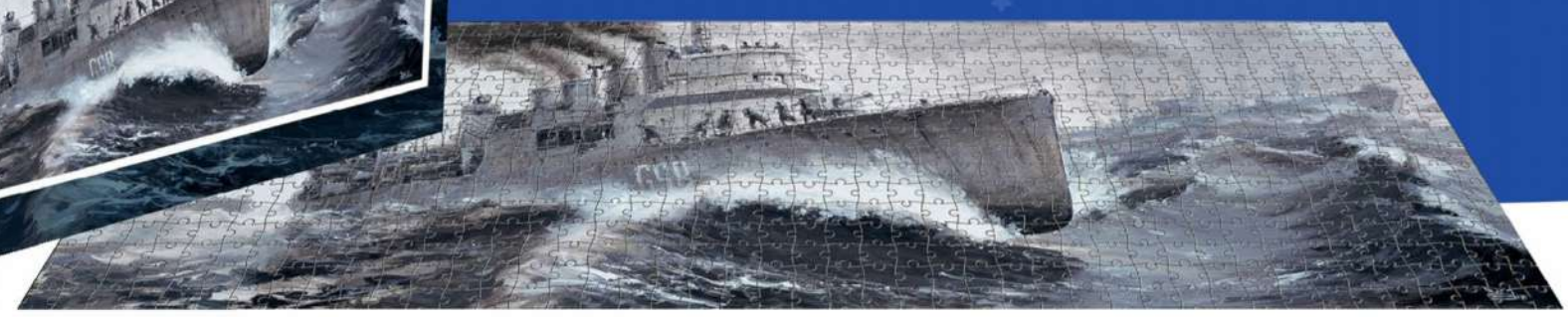

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Image: Wiki / PD / US Gov

PFC Milton L. Cook fires his M60 machine-gun into a treeline after his platoon was attacked by a sniper during Operation Cedar Falls, 8 January 1967

Above: Dedan Kimathi Ji Jaga pictured during his service as a US Marine

Image: Dedan Kimathi Ji Jaga

FROM VIETNAM TO THE BLACK PANTHERS

Dedan Kimathi Ji Jaga recalls his experiences as a Marine during the Vietnam War and his subsequent time as a revolutionary activist

WORDS **TOM GARNER**

African Americans comprised 23 per cent of all US combat troops during the Vietnam War, despite numbering just 11 per cent of the United States' population. Although 22 Black soldiers received the Medal of Honor for extreme courage during the conflict, they fought at a time when the USA was consumed by the Civil Rights Movement. These soldiers not only contended with the enemy but also the endemic racism in their own country. One of those who fought was Dedan Kimathi Ji Jaga, a teenage volunteer in the US Marine Corps, who began his military service with dedicated enthusiasm. He describes how he became disillusioned with the war before becoming a civil rights activist, and how he continues the fight for the rights of his fellow African-American veterans.

Born in 1948, Dedan Kimathi Ji Jaga was raised in Virginia and North Carolina, "There was a lot of prejudice. However, our parents and community largely shielded us and stood their ground. There were instances of concern such as the Night Riders, who were marauding bands of white racists that would victimise Black communities. I would ask my mother, 'Why do people want to hurt us?' but she would say, 'That's the nature of society at this time'."

GERONIMO PRATT

AMERICA'S NELSON MANDELA

Dedan Kimathi Ji Jaga was a close friend of the Black Panther Party activist and decorated Vietnam War veteran who spent 27 years in prison after being wrongfully convicted of murder

Also known as 'Geronimo Ji Jaga', Elmer 'Geronimo' Pratt (1947-2011) volunteered for the 82nd Airborne Division and served two tours in Vietnam. He was awarded a Silver Star, two Bronze Stars and two Purple Hearts before he left the military as a sergeant. After graduating from UCLA he joined the Black Panther Party and became a leader in California.

Pratt was targeted by the FBI in an effort to destroy the Black Panthers. He was arrested for the 1968 murder of Caroline Olsen and the wounding of her husband. Convicted in 1972, he spent 27 years in prison, eight of which were spent in solitary confinement. He was finally released in 1997 after it was discovered that prosecutors had withheld evidence that could have secured his acquittal. The FBI had not disclosed wiretapping evidence that Pratt had been hundreds of miles from the murder scene and during his imprisonment he became an international symbol of racial injustice.

Ji Jaga became close friends with Pratt after corresponding with and visiting him in Mule Creek State Prison. Such was their friendship that it was Pratt who gave Ji Jaga his adopted African name – 'Dedan Kimathi' after a Kenyan leader of the Mau Mau Uprising and 'Ji Jaga' after a Central African tribe. During his visits, Ji Jaga was amazed by Pratt's lack of bitterness, "Geronimo was my hero. The remarkable thing about him was that I never heard him speak in a resentful or hateful tone – none of that. There were times when his conversation was deliberate but he was an open person and always tried to share positive energy with people, particularly me. He was a very special guy."

Elmer 'Geronimo' Pratt pictured on 10 October 2000

© Alamy

Ji Jaga also looked up to his uncle who was a US Marine, "We grew up in Danville, Virginia, and one day I had lunch with him when he was on leave. He had his uniform on and looked like his body had been chipped out of granite. He was exactly what you would expect a Marine to look like – except he was Black. When I walked down the street with him other Black people acknowledged and almost bowed to him and it was the same with white people. They affirmed his presence in a way that they didn't for other people. I was mesmerised by this and never forgot that image."

Ji Jaga was so inspired that he volunteered for the US Marine Corps immediately after leaving high school aged 18 in 1967. However, his uncle was upset when he heard about his nephew's enlistment, "I was trying to step into his shoes and be the Marine that he was. He was upset when he found out I had volunteered and we didn't talk of our common experience for years. When we finally did he told me hadn't wanted me to experience the rampant racism that he had faced in the Marines."

Ji Jaga trained at MCRD Parris Island, South Carolina, where, despite his uncle's misgivings, he thrived during training, "I've always been a fitness nut so I welcomed the physical challenge wholeheartedly. As frightening and intimidating as it was, there was something thrilling about it. The fear factor quickly dissipated and I often thought 'What's next?'. There were serious drill instructors who were classic Marines. They clambered up cables, ropes and trees and you'd think, 'Wow, how can those guys do that?'. The only thing I didn't like were the class sessions. However, they were important too because they taught us how to take care of our weapons and survive. I was waiting for an opportunity to get into a hand-to-hand combat area."

At this time, the Vietnam War had grown increasingly ferocious but Ji Jaga was largely unaware of the danger he may be in, "I watched Walter Cronkite's commentaries every Sunday evening on the news. The number of casualties would be announced but while I watched it, I didn't pay much attention."

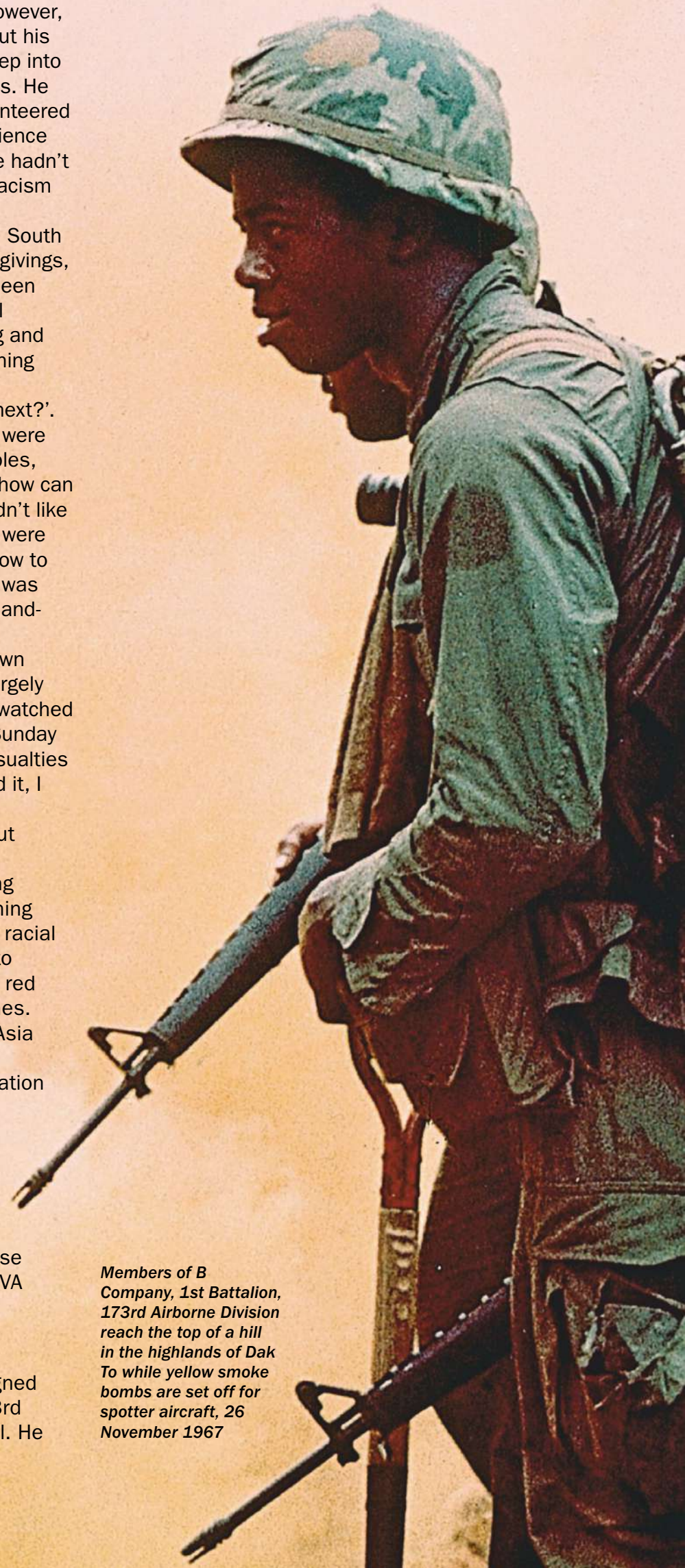
Nevertheless, the Marines were about to prepare their new recruits for war. Ji Jaga had already encountered "troubling incidents" of discrimination during training but his instructors now tried to subdue racial tensions, "They made a special effort to stress that, 'There are no white, black, red or brown guys – you are all green Marines. We're getting you ready for Southeast Asia so you can kill yellow guys'."

Ji Jaga reflects that this blunt equalisation had sinister intent, "It was a conflicted message. They were trying to say that everybody was equal but they wanted us to go and kill people that were 'yellow'. It was psychological conditioning to prepare us to show a real inhumanity towards the Vietnamese people, particularly the Viet Cong and NVA [North Vietnamese Army]."

An "unsubtle introduction"

Following his training, Ji Jaga was assigned to Echo Company, 2nd Marines in the 3rd Marine Division as an E3 lance corporal. He was deployed to Vietnam in December 1967 and recalls his grim introduction to the war began before he had even left the United States, "As we were waiting to board the plane we saw several columns of dead Marines in coffins and body bags that were piled up about 200 yards away. Nobody wanted to look but the morbid curiosity forced you to look anyway. Once we were on board, the aircraft's gregarious flight attendants gave us alcohol. We drank until we passed out and they had to wake us up when we got to Da Nang."

Da Nang was a major US airbase and Ji Jaga spent his first night in Vietnam nearby, "The transit area was located at the foot



Members of B Company, 1st Battalion, 173rd Airborne Division reach the top of a hill in the highlands of Dak To while yellow smoke bombs are set off for spotter aircraft, 26 November 1967

of the landing strip. B-52s and helicopters flew right over the top of the building that we were housed in. You could hear gunfire in the distance and if you looked out to the distant mountainside you could occasionally see tracer rounds going back and forth. It was a somewhat unsubtle introduction to the landscape."

Echo Company was soon dispatched to their operations area although Ji Jaga's first experience of combat was darkly comical, "Three Marines came to collect us in a troop convoy to ride out of Da Nang into the bush where our base was located. We were talking to these guys who were driving when they put their helmets on and picked up their rifles. The driver said, 'When we came to pick you up we got ambushed at this turn so we're getting prepared in case [the enemy] are waiting for us to come back'. They had their helmets and weapons but we in the back didn't have rocks to throw! That's when the reality began to creep in that things were getting serious.

"We heard one shot ring out from the treeline. One of the Marines started laughing, 'That motherf****r's at it again!'. It was a North Vietnamese sniper who used to be very proficient but whose weapon had blown up and impaired his vision. He was no longer an active threat but he still came out of the treeline to shoot in our direction. The three Marines called him 'Can't-Hit-Shit Charlie' but hearing that shot was another layer of reality that we were exposed to."

Once Echo Company reached their operations compound, Ji Jaga encountered a tragic scene, "They showed us to our 'hooch' and said, 'This is your bunk area'. I noticed that somebody's personal possessions were still in place. As I was gathering it up, I saw an unfinished letter. It was the Marine I was replacing who had been killed. He had started writing to his newly married wife and at one point he had written, 'We've got to go out on patrol, I'll finish this letter when I get back. I love you…'. When I read that it f****d me up. I packed his possessions and gave them to the company commander who saw that it was forwarded to the Marine's wife. Afterwards, I made it a point to finish every letter I started before I went out on patrol."

Echo Company began their combat duties as Viet Cong activity increased around their compound during December 1967 to January 1968, "Our patrols increased but they were mostly incident free. We might get a couple of rounds from a sniper or come across a few booby traps that needed disarming but these were not fully fledged confrontations with enemy troops."

One early morning after a night-time patrol, the company was returning to the compound when the lieutenant decided to check a nearby village for enemy activity, "We walked over there as the Sun was just starting to come up – it was hazy and foggy. We came into a side entrance to the village and there was a group of Viet Cong

"'THERE ARE NO WHITE, BLACK, RED OR BROWN GUYS – YOU ARE ALL GREEN MARINES"

© Getty

who had gathered in the centre. There was a 15 year-old boy with them who noticed us first and sounded the alarm. The adults sprinted like they were in an Olympic dash and it was just chaotic as we started shooting."

After the firefight, Ji Jaga discovered the teenage boy, "He was lying there wounded. I walked over to him and he was looking up at me with these big brown eyes. I could sense he was appealing to me for help because he was hurt. My heart was aching for this kid and I didn't know what to do. We couldn't get a chopper in to help him so the medic came and looked at him. He said, 'There's not a lot we can do. He's not going to make it'. They took his body and left."

Ji Jaga was "haunted all that morning" by the encounter but worse was to come when his Australian commanding officer privately talked to him, "He patted me on the back and said, 'You did a good thing, you saved some of your brothers today'. I asked what he was talking about and he replied, 'Because you got that Viet Cong sympathiser'. I didn't know he was referencing the kid, but he was trying to console me…

"As I was trying to deal with this, the kid's mother came rushing into our compound. She was screaming in Vietnamese about her son being killed. A couple of officers came over, guided her into a hooch and a short time later she came out with a box of rations, some old clothes and $25. That was exchange enough for the loss of her son – it pacified her."

Ji Jaga still struggles with the events of that day, "I've now got seven children and every time one of my kids turns 15, I relive that tragedy. I struggle with the fear of something happening to my child… The thing that sticks with me is that I really wish there was something that I could have done to help him, but I couldn't."

Tet Offensive

In just one month, Ji Jaga had already experienced the worst aspects of warfare but at the end of January 1968 American-led forces were hit by the Tet Offensive. One of the largest campaigns of the war, the offensive was launched by approximately 80,000 members of the NVA and Viet Cong against military and civilian installations throughout South Vietnam. During 30 January to 28 March 1968, over 100 South Vietnamese towns and cities were attacked during the offensive's first phase as well as military bases.

The daring nature of the North Vietnamese strategy chimed with Ji Jaga's opinion of their fighting ability, "They were really skilled, worthy enemies. The NVA were probably comparable to elite American forces and the ones we encountered would fight you to the last bullet. You had to recognise the Geneva Convention if they put their hands up but they were diabolical enough to always look for opportunities to take you out. If you made a mistake in dealing with the NVA it could cost you your life – no question."

Ji Jaga's own compound was attacked in a shocking turn of events, "We'd heard that troops were massing with the intention of overrunning cities and compounds and that there were major North Vietnamese forces that were going to be heading south. However, it seemed that an adequate response was not in place and things got really chaotic.

"There were Vietnamese people that worked on our compound who we thought were civilians. A couple of days after the Tet Offensive started we found these people strung dead across the concertina wire with weapons in their hands. They were assaulting the compound where they'd worked and we had employed them.

"The Viet Cong and NVA forces had infiltrated the area and told these people, 'Here's a weapon. Go out there and kill those American Marines'. We found a lot of people who we'd seen in the laundry and mess hall sprawled dead across the defence areas. They had been killed as they came to overrun our compound."

"IF YOU MADE A MISTAKE IN DEALING WITH THE NVA IT COULD COST YOU YOUR LIFE – NO QUESTION"

The Tet Offensive continued in two more phases until it ended on 23 September 1968. Its effects consequently took up all of Ji Jaga's active service. Although its final result was a tactical victory for American-led forces, the offensive shocked the US government and public and led to increasingly vocal criticism of

A 175mm M107 gun at Camp Carroll provides fire support for ground forces during the Battle of Khe Sanh

Source: WIKI / PD / US Army Heritage and Education Center

A wounded soldier is carried by members of the 1st Cavalry Division under heavy shelling two miles from the Cambodian border, 31 March 1967

© Getty

US Marines hurl grenades in close-quarters fighting near the Demilitarized Zone, c.1968

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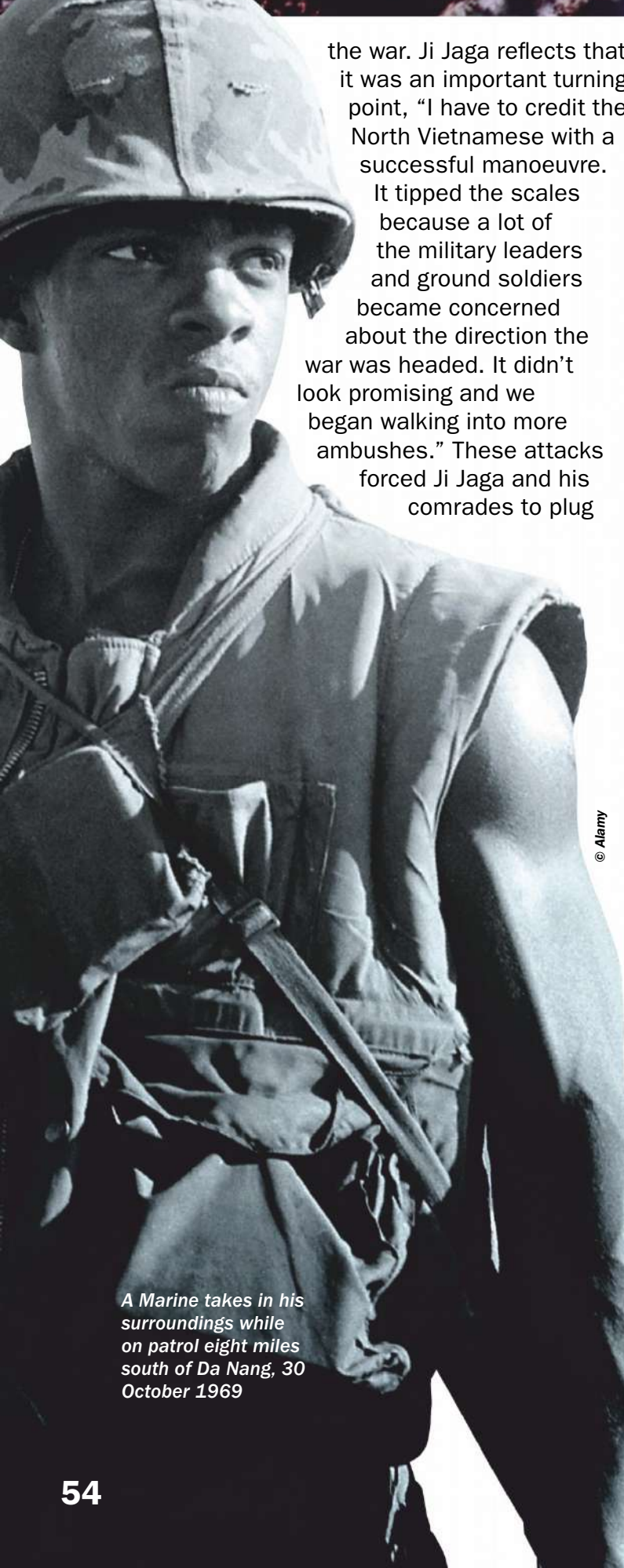

A Marine takes in his surroundings while on patrol eight miles south of Da Nang, 30 October 1969

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the war. Ji Jaga reflects that it was an important turning point, "I have to credit the North Vietnamese with a successful manoeuvre. It tipped the scales because a lot of the military leaders and ground soldiers became concerned about the direction the war was headed. It didn't look promising and we began walking into more ambushes." These attacks forced Ji Jaga and his comrades to plug gaps in breached defences, "The unit I was in was known as 'Rent-A-Battalion' because we would be called to work with an army or Marine unit that had fallen under siege or trapped in an ambush. It would be our responsibility to go and alleviate whatever situation they had found themselves in."

The danger posed to the Marines became acute, "We would often go on these operations through checkpoints. The Marines at these checkpoints would let us through but they would do the Catholic sign of the cross. This was because the operations were often viewed as suicide missions. However, we had to be in these particular strategic locations so that other parts of operations could be successful."

To maximise his safety Ji Jaga heavily armed himself, although his personal arsenal was because of a previous accident, "I carried a .45 pistol, M14 rifle, an M79 grenade launcher and ammunition for all three. A lot of my Marine buddies would say, 'Why are you carrying all of that stuff?'. It's mainly because I had received a brand new M16 [automatic rifle] but it had malfunctioned in combat. When I bent down to fix it I accidentally cut my hand open on some elephant grass. I rolled over on my elbows and when I did that an NVA soldier shot at me. The rounds hit my backpack and blew it off while one of the Marines behind me killed the NVA soldier. I was stuck out there for the rest of that day with a broken M16 and when I got back I threw it away and got the other three weapons instead. Those were my weapons of choice for the duration of the tour but I've still got a scar on the palm of my right hand."

Ji Jaga states that combat was both exhilarating and tragic, "It often seemed like I was the star in my own full-length picture. I was intoxicated by the adrenalin rushes and it was something that you got into until you had to deal with the loss of one of your friends. That's when it became very sobering."

Protective "brothers"

During his time in Vietnam, Ji Jaga served in a company with many experienced veterans, "I was fortunate in that my unit mostly consisted of Black veterans who were on their second or third tours. This was almost unheard of and when I got there I was like a freshman on a basketball team."

The veterans would help their less experienced comrades to the point of disobeying orders, "They protected us as though we were their little brothers. The white officers would often come and say, 'We want you guys to go across this open field, into that treeline and set a listening post etc'. However, these [experienced] guys would say, 'Sir, that's suicide. You can't send these guys over there for that'. They would speak in our defence because we had no knowledge of how dangerous that could have been.

"THEY MADE IT CLEAR TO THE WHITE MARINES AND OFFICERS, 'IF YOU KILL ONE OF OURS, WE'LL DO ALL OF YOURS'"

"Even in the instances where the officers would insist, these guys would say, 'OK sir, whatever'. When an officer would leave, there were two or three brothers with a machine-gun who would lead us. They'd say, 'You guys come over here, sit your asses down behind that machine-gun nest and be quiet'. The whole time we were supposed to be out on the listening posts, which was essentially in enemy territory, we sat behind the machine-gunners being protected by them."

The Black veterans also made their authority clear to their white counterparts, "The white Marines that came to that unit were told by the experienced guys, 'We understand that you might be uncomfortable but if you dance to our music then you won't have problems. However, if you can't understand who's in charge here then it's not going to turn out well for you'. These were no idle threats. If you put yourself in a position where you endangered somebody else, especially the experienced guys, it was

Viet Cong soldiers charge the enemy in South Vietnam during the Tet Offensive. Ji Jaga described North Vietnamese forces as "worthy enemies"

just a matter of time before you were going to be eliminated. They made it clear to the white Marines and officers, 'If you kill one of ours, we'll do all of yours'."

Ji Jaga states that these uneasy race relations were ultimately superseded by the war itself, "The racism was there but because everything else was so intense it rarely had an opportunity to prevail. Everybody was trying to live and if you happened to be with a group that had the know-how to survive then you were very fortunate – and I was."

"Revolutionary consciousness"

The suppressed racial tensions Ji Jaga experienced were occurring at a time when the Civil Rights Movement in America was reaching a climax. However, Ji Jaga's own political awakening was prompted by the North Vietnamese, "Vietnam was the birth of my revolutionary consciousness because at that point we were finding ourselves in some pretty intrepid parts of the jungle. We started finding propaganda leaflets that said, 'Black Marines or GIs. Why are you here committing the same atrocities against the Vietnamese people that the Ku Klux Klan and white supremacists are committing against your family and friends back in the United States right now?'.

"The first time I found one of those communist leaflets a white lieutenant came over and snatched it out of my hand before I could read it. I thought that was curious but these leaflets were saturated throughout the jungle so I eventually got one to read and it made sense. The Black Panther Party had just come into power and new Black Marines were coming to Vietnam who told us about people like H. Rap Brown, Bobby Seale and Huey Newton. They were representing the interests of Black people and challenging the authorities. That same sense of pride I once had for the Marines was starting to develop for Black revolutionaries. The propaganda made me question a lot of things in terms of why I was in Vietnam when it appeared that America was turning against people of colour. That was a crucial turning point for me."

Ji Jaga's burgeoning radicalism was the start of his political activism while his combat service was cut short. During operations to relieve besieged American forces during the Battle of Khe Sanh, he was wounded by friendly fire, "There were two columns of Marines with one coming up one side of a mountain and we were on the other side. In between was a grouping of NVA soldiers and an observation helicopter saw them and alerted a gunship. The coordinates somehow got screwed up and they came behind us, mistook us for the enemy troops and opened fire. As a consequence several of us were wounded and we were dispatched to field hospitals. From there I was ultimately sent to the hospital ship USS Repose to recover."

Ji Jaga was recovering on board USS Repose when he heard about the assassination of Dr Martin Luther King on 4 April 1968. The news made him feel "more helpless" about the racial situation in America and when he returned

Image: Dedan Kimathi Ji Jaga

***Above:** Dedan Kimathi Ji Jaga (right) pictured with his friend 'Spiller' after emerging from a bunker during a mortar attack*

TO THE BLACK PANTHERS

NABVETS

The National Association for Black Veterans is an American nationwide organisation that helps ex-servicemen and women with benefits claims and community assistance

NABVETS is a nationally certified veterans' organisation that provides personal advocacy on behalf of black veterans seeking claims against the US Department of Veterans Affairs. Formed in 1969 by Vietnam veterans, its missions includes advocacy for youth and families' community involvement to helping create positive lifestyles for low-income and minority veterans.

The organisation has over 100 chapters across the USA with Dedan Kimathi Ji Jaga serving as the commander of Bay Area Chapter 127 in Richmond, California. He explains NABVETS role, "We work diligently to aid veterans. There are many instances where I've dealt with veterans who went 30-50 years without receiving entitlements even though they were earned. If there is a question of potential benefits we try to clarify whether or not we can give those veterans due consideration."

Although NABVETS is congressionally chartered it does not receive as much federal funding as other veterans organisations. Ji Jaga believes that this needs to change, "It's problematic because there are more underrepresented minority veterans who are homeless and becoming a growing demographic. They're going through the same deprivations that American veterans of colour have been experiencing for decades. We're able to bring a little attention to that but there is nothing in place that will allow the development of an ongoing programme and that's one of the things that we'd like to see. NABVETS would like to have that in place so that we can do fundraisers. This would enable us to build programmes to help, particularly for women of colour with children who find themselves homeless."

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT: WWW.NABVETS.WEEBLY.COM

***Below:** The 'Three Soldiers' bronze statue at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington DC was the first representation of an African American on the National Mall*

© Alamy

home he and some of his fellow Black Marines were completely disillusioned, “We had just come from a hostile combat environment so saluting and standing attention was alien to us now.” After several ‘run-ins’ with his officers and almost being court-martialled, Ji Jaga mutually agreed to ‘separate’ from the Marines and left in September 1968. It had been a relatively short service that had nevertheless been “a whirlwind experience”.

Black Panthers

Like many Vietnam servicemen, Ji Jaga’s mental health began to suffer after he left the Marines. He lived alone and became a recluse, “The night was the only time I felt alive. In the daytime I would go into a dark room if I wanted to feel normal, I spent all my time cleaning my weapons.”

After his family intervened, Ji Jaga applied for service-related disability benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs but he was not granted entitlements. He instead found an outlet by joining the Black Panther Party shortly after he returned from Vietnam. The Black Panthers were a revolutionary socialist political organisation that conducted armed citizens’ patrols to challenge American police brutality. They also introduced social programmes for Black communities and at their peak they had offices in dozens of cities and thousands of members.

Ji Jaga initially distributed party newspapers on the East Coast but he also conducted weapons training, “People were saying that the revolution was imminent and my Black Panther colleagues felt that things were either going to get better or much worse. I felt we should be prepared in either event and knew some youngsters who came to my house to hear my war stories. I decided to do something more productive with them and introduced them to weapons and survival tactics.”

“WE’RE ALL HUMAN FIRST AND IF WE CAN IDENTIFY EACH OTHER AS THAT THEN WE CAN CHANGE SOME OF THE THINGS THAT ARE HAPPENING”

Ji Jaga also came close to clashing with the police, “I never had any classic battles with the authorities but there were some close encounters. There would be situations where we would show up and there was still a police action in effect that had been a shootout. We’d also be constantly tailed by the police. They made it quite obvious that they knew who we were but we weren’t trafficking weapons and we were never pulled over.”

After moving to California, which was the headquarters of the Black Panthers, Ji Jaga became a party veterans’ advocate after he formed the San Francisco chapter of the Vietnam Veterans of America. His work with ex-servicemen eventually became his main occupation although he continued his association with the Black Panthers until 1997.

“American discord”

In 21st century America, the questions of police brutality and race have once again become prominent although as Ji Jaga points out, “None of this is new and this sickness that America suffers from shows that she’s as ill as she’s ever been. Many would like to say that it’s because of Donald Trump, but Trump is just the blemish on the face of that American discord. People need to come to terms with that. The one thing that’s encouraging is that a lot of young people are questioning perceptions about Black people. We’re all human first and if we can identify each other as that then we can change some of the things that are happening.”

Irrespective of racial debates, respect for the military remains a cornerstone of American national life. However, when it was alleged that President Donald Trump had made slurs against veterans and fallen soldiers in a report from September 2020, veterans were outraged. The comments – which were reported in *The Atlantic* and independently confirmed by many sources from the Associated Press – were widely condemned, including by Ji Jaga, “I found it appalling. I’m not the most patriotic person but for Donald Trump to make such offensive statements by calling veterans ‘losers’ and ‘quitters’ was insulting. He’ll never have enough character to fill the shoes of any American veteran who has given their life in the service of their country. He should be ashamed.”

Ji Jaga, who did not receive his own service-related disability benefits for over 30 years, continues to assist his fellow African American veterans. For him, caring for ex-servicemen – regardless of politics – is a profound duty, “My mantra is that we’ve done a lot for our veterans but not enough. They deserve so much more.”

***Below:** Black Panther Party Members stand outside the New York City Courthouse under a portion of an Abraham Lincoln quote, 11 April 1969*

***Right:** A weary soldier rests for a moment while the Vietnam War rages around him, 24 January 1969*

© Getty

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JOURNEY THROUGH THE EMPIRE OF HISTORY'S MOST FAMOUS WARLORD

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Heroes of the Victoria Cross

LACHHIMAN GURUNG

In 1945, after the Allies took Burma, 200 retreating Japanese soldiers ran into a one-man army – a Gurkha rifleman, who held his ground single-handed

WORDS **HARETH AL BUSTANI**

Rifleman Lachhiman Gurung is in shock. Moments earlier, a Japanese grenade blew up in his right hand. His comrades lie on the floor groaning, but Gurung cannot hear them for the ringing in his ears. Flashes punctuate the pitch-black darkness beyond, but he can only see out of his left eye. Waves of desperate Japanese soldiers emerge from the jungle, roaring and firing their guns. Gurung reaches for his rifle, but his right hand has been blown apart. His body is in utter shock, but the 17-inch 'kukri' Gurkha fighting knife fixed to his right hip reassures him. Drawing a slow breath, he responds to the chaos with calm, loading and raising his rifle with his left hand, and aiming with deadly accuracy at the darkness beyond.

This was no ordinary engagement – for the Japanese it was a matter of life and death. Just days earlier, the Burmese capital of Rangoon had fallen to the Allies. When Japan's 15th Army swept into Burma from Thailand in 1941 – as part of their own Blitzkrieg in the week that followed the attack on Pearl Harbor – they could scarcely have imagined such a stark outcome.

***Right:** After taking the Burmese capital, British General William Slim ordered the 89th Indian Brigade to intercept a retreating Japanese force at the Taungdaw Valley*

Taking Burma had not only severed China's crucial southwestern 'Burma Road' supply link, but given the Empire of Japan a bridgehead for a future invasion of India – simultaneously protecting the rear of their forces attacking Malaya. By March 1942, the Japanese had captured the Burmese capital of Rangoon and driven the British forces into India. In the ensuing 100 days, they marched 1,500 miles across the country.

The Allies were still keen to keep China in the war, in order to stretch the Japanese as much as possible. However, to do that, they would have to find a way to break the Burma Road back open, and reclaim the communication hub of Myitkyina on the Irrawaddy River. Early efforts, such as the attempt to capture the southwestern coast of Arakan, ended in dismal failure – as the Allies found themselves

Images: © Getty

LACHHIMAN GURUNG

At 4'11", had Gurung tried to enlist in the Gurkhas at a time of peace, he would have been dismissed as too short

"THAT INDOMITABLE SPIRIT OF TODAY'S GURKHAS IS THE LEGACY OF MR GURUNG. IT'S THIS SPIRIT FOR WHICH WE SHOULD SHOW GRATITUDE AND REMEMBER HIM"

Colonel David Hayes CBE, of the Brigade of Gurkhas

outflanked, riddled with malaria and finally, held back by the annual monsoon season. However, in 1943, Major General Orde Wingate's specially trained guerrilla warfare forces, the Chindits, began making headway with their Long Range Penetration tactics – wreaking havoc on Japan's communication lines.

With the Allies beginning to amass serious military strength, Japan launched a pre-emptive attack on the British bases of Imphal and Kohima, in northeast India. Although this distracted the British from committing to another attempt to seize Arakan, the Japanese took a huge gamble – assuming they would be victorious within three weeks. It was an unprecedented disaster. After pushing their supply lines beyond breaking point, only 30,000 of the 85,000 Japanese troops were fit enough to withdraw – and those who did were forced to abandon their supplies, transport, tanks and guns.

After the monsoon season, in 1944, the Allies launched a multi-pronged attack to retake Burma. The new commander of Japan's Burma Area Army, General Kimura, was told he would receive no further support. To make matters worse, General William Slim, commander of the Allies' BurCorps, seized on the retreat, chasing the withdrawing Japanese even into the monsoon season. Crossing over the Chindwin, he began the final campaign to take Burma – Operation Capital – launching simultaneous attacks on Mandalay, and the communications centre of Meiktila.

By March 1945, both positions fell to the Allies, and on 3 May the Burmese capital of Rangoon succumbed to joint airborne and amphibious landings. Although some 70,000 Japanese soldiers remained, they were shattered and scattered, desperately clawing their way back together through the hot, muddy jungle. To the Allies, allowing the Japanese to regroup was simply not an option. To the Japanese, succumbing to disease and starvation, the entire war was at stake.

Determined to cut off the enemy retreat, Slim ordered the 89th Indian Brigade from his 7th Division to cross the Irrawaddy River and destroy a Japanese force making its way into the Taungdaw Valley. The 4th Battalion of the 8th Gurkha Rifles detached two companies to a village on the west bank of the river. However, they ended up encircled by the Japanese and cut off from their own communication lines.

Rifleman Gurung was the spearhead of one of the most important defensive positions – set 100 yards ahead of the main company. Roughly 27-years-old, Gurung had joined the Gurkhas five years earlier. At 4 foot 11 inches, remarkably, if it had been a time of peace, he would have been too short to enlist. He knew well that this was a post the Allies could not afford to lose – if it fell, the command post would be turned. Night after night, he and his brothers-in-arms waited patiently, expecting the inevitable.

In the early hours of 13 May, as the Gurkha stared down the jungle path beyond, he sensed something stir. Suddenly, a great mass of shadows emerged from the overgrowth, screaming. Bullets ricocheted past Gurung and his two comrades, flashes of gunfire flickering ever-closer. Launching a suicidal charge, 200 frenzied Japanese soldiers closed in on Gurung's position. The defenders did their best to pin the attackers down, but they were utterly overwhelmed.

To his horror, Gurung heard the pitter-patter of grenades landing around him – including one on the lip of his trench. Acting on instinct, he ran over and hurled it back, only for another to land just outside. Once again, he frantically picked it up and threw it back. When a third fell at his feet, as he scurried desperately to throw it back, it exploded in his hand. In an instant, his fingers were blown in all directions, his arm shattered, his right eye blinded, and his body and leg gored. He turned to his comrades, but they were both lying on the floor, helplessly writhing in agony.

Emboldened, the Japanese attackers pressed together, shoulder-to-shoulder and began hurtling towards the trench with even more ferocity. Pain and shock searing through

***Below:** The Burma campaign was the Allies' longest of World War II*

his body and brain, Gurung simply loaded up his rifle with his left hand, propped it up and began shooting – remarkably maintaining a steady rate of fire on a bolt action designed for right-handed use. Despite his condition, he fired with such discipline and accuracy, he was able to pick off enough enemies to flatten their charge, sending them fleeing for cover. However, Gurung knew this was far from over.

As they regrouped, the Gurkha held his nerve, waiting for the right moment to resume firing. As he sunk into the rhythm, he turned his agony into an advantage. Amid the chaos, his comrades deeper in the trench could hear Gurung roar, "Come and fight a Gurkha!" over his gunshots. In this manner, he cut down wave after wave of attack, each more desperate, more suicidal than the last – holding the position alone for four long hours. Some got so close, he ended up frantically shooting them at point blank range, refusing to yield an inch.

After the long night was over, of the 87 dead Japanese soldiers, 31 lay right outside Gurung's position. The Gurkha himself was taken to hospital – where he learned he would not only lose his right hand, but never again see out of his right eye. The Japanese army returned for three more days and two nights, but this time Gurung's comrades, inspired by his remarkable performance followed suit, beating back every wave, while yelling, "Ayo Gorkhali – the Gurkhas are here!" As Gurung recovered, the Japanese suffered 17,000 casualties trying to break out of Burma – continuing to engage in sporadic skirmishes until signing a ceasefire in August.

Gurung was invested with the Victoria Cross by Lord Louis Mountbatten at a parade at Delhi's Red Fort on 19 December 1945. The citation declared, "This Rifleman, by his magnificent example, so inspired his comrades to resist the enemy to the last that, although surrounded and cut off for three days and two nights, they held and smashed every attack. His outstanding gallantry and extreme devotion to duty, in the face of almost overwhelming odds, were the main factors in the defeat of the enemy." His 74-year-old father, who was too frail to travel such a long distance, was carried from his Nepalese village for 11 days to see his son decorated.

Gurung continued to serve the 8th Gurkha Rifles until transferring to the Indian Army when the country gained independence in 1947 – retiring that year as a havildar, or sergeant. Reflecting, Gurung later said, "I had to fight because there was no other way. I felt I was going to die anyway, so I might as well die standing on my feet. All I knew was that I had to go on and hold them back. I am glad that helped the other soldiers in my platoon, but they would have all done the same thing." He died in 2010 at the age of 92, with his granddaughter by his side – having played an instrumental role in a campaign to allow former Gurkhas to settle in the UK.

Images: © Getty

***Above:** Rifleman Gurung played a leading role in Joanna Lumley's campaign to secure Gurkhas' right to settle in Britain*

"MY FATHER FOUGHT BRAVELY DURING WORLD WAR II AND HE WAS AN INSPIRATION FOR MANY. WE WANT HIS STORY TO REACH MANY PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY YOUNGSTERS"

Gurung's son, Colonel Shiv Dutt Gurung

SUPERMARINE WALRUS

The ubiquitous 'Shagbat', was the RAF's flying boat workhorse of the Second World War

MAIN ACCESS
Entry and exit to the aircraft while at sea was through the cockpit roof, so no potentially leaky fuselage doors were needed.

AMPHIBIOUS UNDERCARRIAGE
The undercarriage allowed the Walrus to be used on land or aircraft carriers, and folded up into the lower wing when operating as a flying boat.

WORDS **STUART HADAWAY**

Based on a successful line of flying boats, the Walrus began life with a Royal Australian Navy requirement in 1929. Supermarine's Chief Designer, R. J. Mitchell, updated their successful Seagull range and the resulting, essentially entirely new, aircraft was designated the Seagull V. However, when the type was also adopted by the British services, it was renamed the Walrus. Lacking the elegance of Mitchell's more famous designs, the type was built to be catapulted from the decks of warships, for use in spotting for naval guns, mounting anti-submarine patrols, and conducting general reconnaissance. The construction was rugged and tough to enable it to take the punishment of catapult operations, and proved capable of operating in a wide range of seas and environments around the world.

Affectionately known as the 'Shagbat', it became a workhorse for small scale amphibious use around the globe during the Second World War, despite being an outdated and relatively slow aircraft. As well as serving with a number of Allied navies, it equipped ten full Royal Air Force squadrons and several flights conducting air sea rescue sorties as well as running special operations to retrieve personnel or deliver agents and equipment behind enemy lines.

“THE TYPE WAS BUILT TO BE CATAPULTED FROM THE DECKS OF WARSHIPS, FOR USE IN SPOTTING FOR NAVAL GUNS, MOUNTING ANTI-SUBMARINE PATROLS, AND CONDUCTING GENERAL RECONNAISSANCE”

SUPERMARINE WALRUS

COMMISSIONED:	1929
ORIGIN:	BRITISH/AUSTRALIAN
LENGTH:	11.58M (38FT)
WINGSPAN:	13.97M (45FT 10IN)
RANGE:	965KM (600 ML)
ENGINE:	BRISTOL PEGASUS VI 510KW (650HP) RADIAL ENGINE
CREW:	4
WEAPONS:	2 X 7.7MM (0.303IN) VICKERS K MACHINE-GUNS & UP TO 270KG (600LB) OF BOMBS

© Battlefield Design

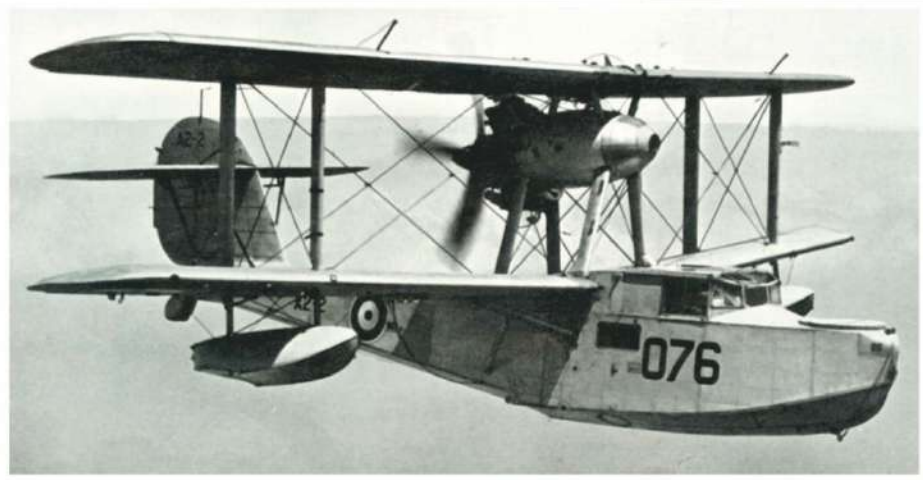
WINCH POINTS
Four bolts on the upper wing were used to connect cables, to allow the type to be winched on or off ships at sea.

SEA RUDDER
A cover would slip down over the tail wheel when in the water, augmenting the main rudder with a small underwater rudder.

Naval air observers receiving instructions in front of a Supermarine Walrus, 20 December 1939

© Getty

Supermarine Walrus in flight, January 1941



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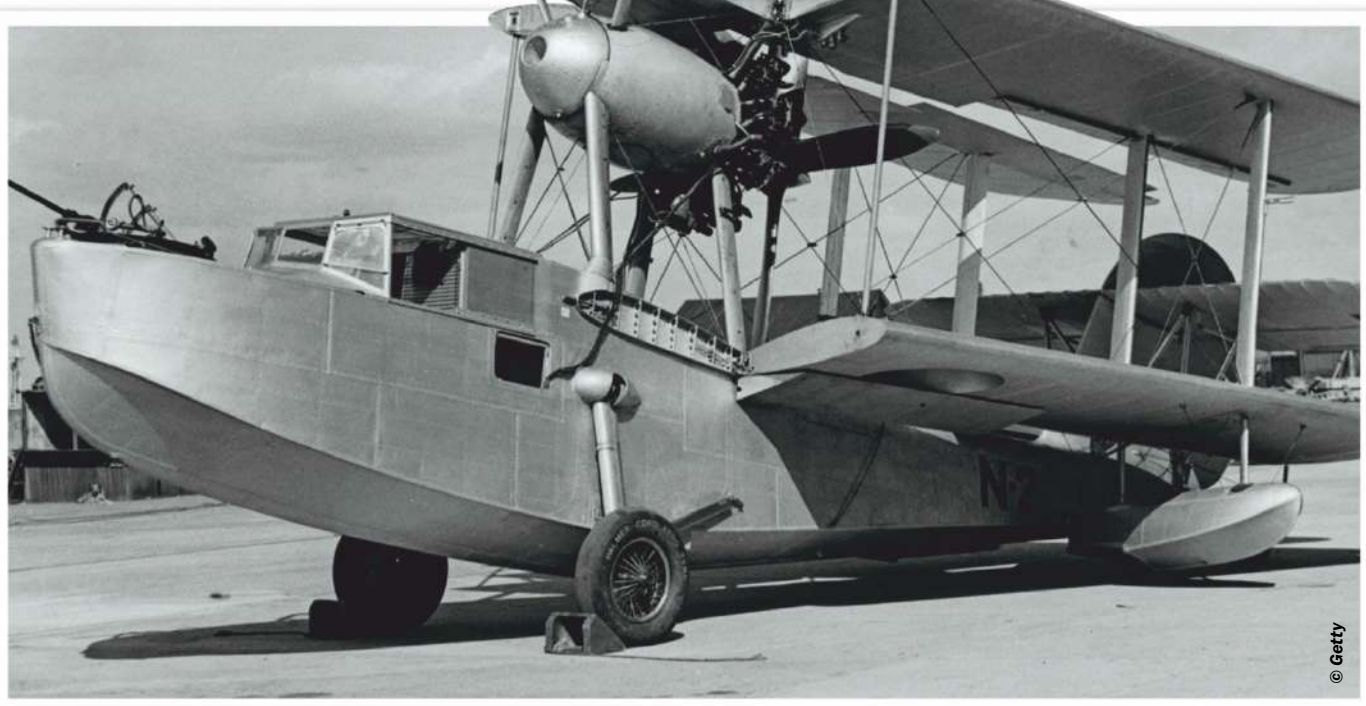
Technically, the main armament of a Walrus would be the naval guns it directed

Source: Wiki / PD / IWM

"ON ITS FIRST PUBLIC APPEARANCE (JUST FIVE DAYS AFTER ITS FIRST FLIGHT), THE WALRUS PERFORMED A LOOP THE LOOP IN FRONT OF AN ASTONISHED CROWD"

ARMAMENT

The Walrus was armed with two 7.7mm (0.303in) Vickers K, drum-fed machine-guns, each in an open turret. One turret was in the nose of the aircraft, and the second amid-ships behind the engine. Neither had a dedicated gunner, but were manned by the co-pilot and wireless operator. The type could also carry either six 45kg (100lb) bombs or two 250kg (112lb) bombs or depth charges slung under the wings inboard of the floats. Some aircraft were also fitted with Air to Surface Vessel radar from 1941.



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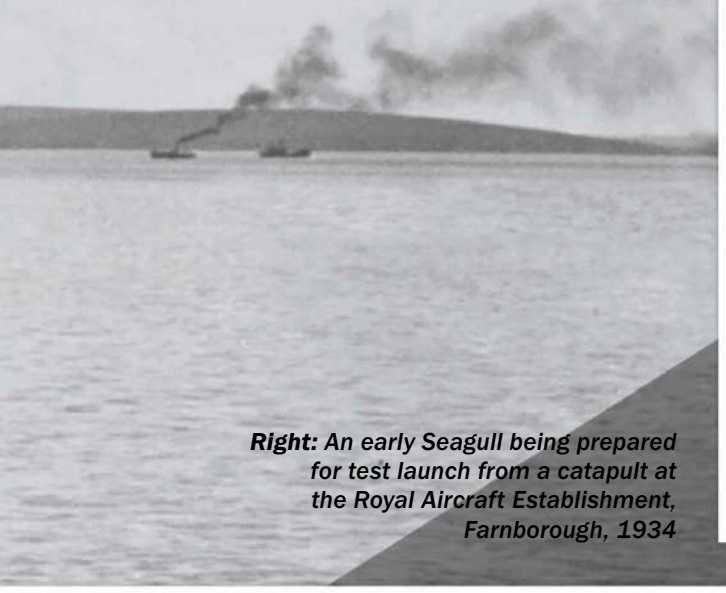
The nose gunner would be highly exposed at the front of the aircraft

DESIGN

Although lacking R. J. Mitchell's customary graceful lines, the Walrus was a tough nut. On its first public appearance (just five days after its first flight), the Walrus performed a loop the loop in front of an astonished crowd. The hull was constructed of light aluminium alloy, with a metal skin, and it handled well both in the water and the air. The wings were fabric covered with steel spars and wooden ribs; they could be folded back to reduce the wingspan to only 5.3m (17ft 6in) for ease of storage on ships.



***Right:** An early Seagull being prepared for test launch from a catapult at the Royal Aircraft Establishment, Farnborough, 1934*

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ENGINE

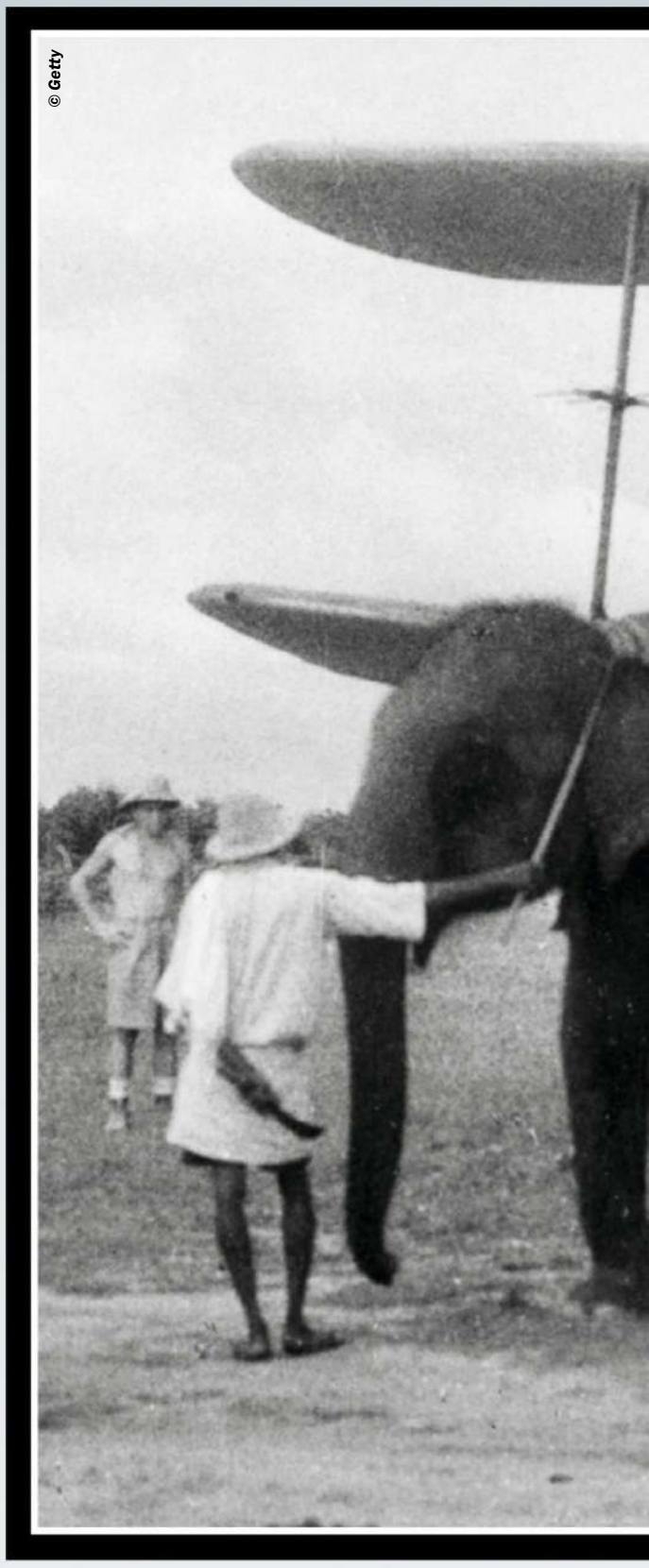
The Bristol Pegasus was one of the most successful radial engines of all time. The original 474kW (635hp) Pegasus II was replaced by the Pegasus VI, rated at 510kW (650hp). Both were nine-cylinder, air-cooled engines with a 3m (10ft) four-bladed propeller. The engine was fitted as a 'pusher' with the propeller at the rear, preventing spray from being kicked up into the engine. It also kept the propeller clear of the top of cockpit, where crew members stood to attach winch cables.

The rear-facing propeller meant great care was needed in and around the rear gunner's position

© Alamy

The Walrus cockpit's layout was crude but functional

© Alamy



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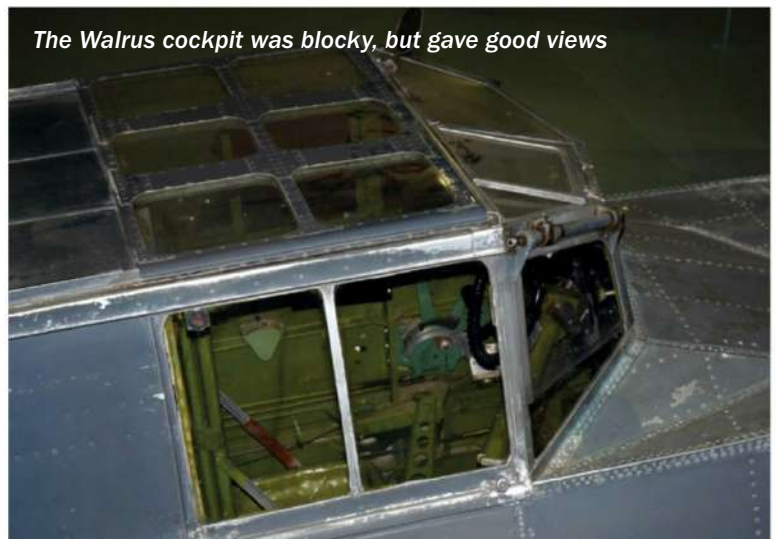
COCKPIT

The cockpit was functional, with a pilot's seat on the port (left) side and a folding seat for a co-pilot on the starboard (right) side. Each seat had a socket for a control column, but only one column was carried – control was passed literally, with the column being unplugged, moved and re-inserted. Behind the pilot sat the navigator, facing backwards, while the wireless operator sat facing him. Crew members could crawl forward or rearwards to get into the gunner's positions.



The Walrus cockpit was blocky, but gave good views

Source: Wiki / CC 2.0 / Roland Turner

SERVICE HISTORY

After its first flight in 1933, the type entered service with the Royal Australian Navy, and soon after with the Royal Air Force, who still provided the air arm of the Royal Navy (until 1939). The Walrus saw wartime service with the RAF, the Fleet Air Arm, and the Australian, New Zealand and Canadian navies. It served on-board ships and from the shore around the world. Walruses only operated in their intended naval gunnery spotting role twice, both in the Mediterranean – at the Battle of Spartivento in 1940, and the Battle of Cape Matapan in 1941. From 1941 some were fitted with Air to Surface Vessel radar to assist with anti-submarine patrols, but from 1943 the shipboard role was ended. From then, its role was increasingly Air Sea Rescue, saving thousands of lives.

The type was withdrawn from British and Australian service soon after the war, but continued around the world, including in Ireland, Portugal, Turkey and finally with the Argentine Navy until 1958.

***Left:** A Fleet Air Arm Walrus being manoeuvred in India, 1944*

***Below:** A Walrus on patrol in the English Channel with an air sea rescue launch, 1943*

"THE WALRUS SAW WARTIME SERVICE WITH THE RAF, THE FLEET AIR ARM, AND THE AUSTRALIAN, NEW ZEALAND AND CANADIAN NAVIES. IT SERVED ON-BOARD SHIPS AND FROM THE SHORE AROUND THE WORLD"

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FUTURE

HOME FRONT

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Ahead of his new BBC series, Will Millard discusses why the Welsh landscape was the perfect WWII training ground

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MUSEUMS & EVENTS

Discover IWM's spotlight on modern aid workers, a museum dedicated to the Army Air Corps and a 1745 Jacobite Rising ruined barracks

IWM's aid worker tribute

IWM North's new exhibition explores the vital role of aid workers who assist those in need during modern conflicts

Across the world, aid organisations are working to support, care for and protect vulnerable populations forced to flee their homes because of conflict. However, difficult questions arise about who they choose to help, which risks to undertake and whether the presence of aid organisations do more than harm than good. These are some of the challenges that are explored in 'Aid Workers: Ethics Under Fire', which is a new exhibition at IWM North in Greater Manchester.

Running from 1 October 2020 to 31 May 2021 as part of IWM's 'Refugees' season, the exhibition highlights the practical, emotional and ethical challenges faced by aid workers on the front lines of conflict zones. It includes a display of objects, photographs and filmed interviews with aid workers, many of which have been specifically sourced and recorded. Exploring such themes as the reach of aid, funds, responsibility and risk, the exhibition reveals the dilemmas encountered while operating in areas including Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, South Sudan, Syria and Yemen. These countries have a combined number of 17.5 million people who have fled due to recent conflicts.

'Ethics Under Fire' uses its individual experiences to tell a global story. Combining personal 'in the field' testimonies with scenario-based interactives, visitors will be encouraged to think about how they might respond to situations faced daily by aid workers. They will additionally learn about the difficult choices and compromises that often precede an outcome.

There are also a number of new acquisitions on display that give an insight into the conditions that aid workers encounter. Exhibited items include an ICRC mine warning sign, a Syrian Red Crescent food parcel and even an innovative shelter for refugees designed by IKEA. One major loan is a Médecins Sans Frontières Land Cruiser, which is an iconic vehicle that is associated with aid work. All of these personal belongings and equipment are displayed to highlight how the mental and physical health of aid workers can be affected in the field.

Amanda Mason, Senior Curator of Contemporary Conflict at the IWM says, "By presenting these experiences of aid workers, many of whom are displaced themselves, alongside digital, scenario-based interactives, this exhibition will give visitors the opportunity to explore the choices they would make if faced with similar circumstances. Highlighting the very real consequences of decision making, we hope that the participatory nature of this exhibition reveals how ethically challenging it is to work with displaced people in conflict zones."

***Clockwise from below:** Museum visitors explore 'Aid Workers: Ethics Under Fire' at IWM North*

An MSF identity card issued to Dr Natalie Roberts in 2015 when she was the Emergency Coordinator for MSF's response in Yemen

A museum visitor explores a Refugee Housing Unit that is partially created by IKEA

Médecins Sans Frontières B-52 Toyota Land Cruiser

Saleem Ghadhban is an International Red Cross field officer for weapon contamination in Iraq. Saleem had been working in mine detection for more than ten years before joining the ICRC's team in 2016

All images: IWM unless otherwise stated

Image: Ibrahim Sherkhan and the ICRC

For more information visit: www.iwm.org.uk

Redcoats at Ruthven

Ruthven Barracks is a haunting complex of 18th century military buildings that were destroyed by Bonnie Prince Charlie's Jacobites

Located in the Badenoch area of the Scottish Highlands, Ruthven Barracks was built by the British government during 1719-21 in the aftermath of the 1715 Jacobite Rising. Constructed on the site of what had originally been a 13th century castle for Clan Comyn, the three-storey barracks could accommodate 120 soldiers and 30 dragoons. The complex consisted of sleeping quarters, a guardroom, prison, bakehouse, brewhouse, stables and a parade ground. The troops could also defend themselves behind a curtain wall, turrets and musket-loops.

During the 1745 Rising, approximately a dozen soldiers of the 6th Regiment of Foot commanded by Sergeant Terrence Molloy successfully defended the barracks against 200 Jacobites. Molloy was promoted to lieutenant but he was forced to surrender Ruthven to a larger force the following year. Jacobite leaders also met there the day after their decisive defeat at the Battle of Culloden and burned the buildings on 17 April 1746. The ruins of the barracks remain as they were in 1746 and the site is free to visit all year round.

Designated as a Scheduled Monument by Historic Scotland, the barracks are located one mile from Kingussie where they are signposted from the A9 and A86 roads in the centre of the town. There is also parking available at the site.

Ruthven Barracks is the best preserved of four British government barracks that were built after the 1715 Jacobite Rising

© Alamy

For more information visit:
www.historicenvironment.scot

The Army's Wings

The Army Flying Museum in Hampshire tells the story of the British Army's combat aviation arm with displays of fixed-wing aircraft, gliders and helicopters

Although the Royal Air Force is by far the largest component of Britain's aerial armed forces, the Army Air Corps (AAC) employs 2,000 personnel and consists of approximately 200 aircraft. The Army Flying Museum is therefore dedicated to the aviation heritage of the British Army. With a story stretching back over 100 years, the museum covers the army's flying history from the Royal Engineers balloon sections, the establishment of the Royal Flying Corps and Air Observation Post squadrons in 1912 through to the creation of today's AAC in 1957.

Located at Middle Wallop, Hampshire, with over 35 fixed-wing and rotary aircraft on display, the museum is the perfect place to explore the fascinating story of army aviation. The AAC's first incarnation began in 1942 and the museum's WWII aircraft include gliders such as the Airspeed Horsa, Waco CG-4, GAL.49 Hamilcar and GAL.48 Hotspur. These are all displayed in an exhibit dedicated to the Glider Pilot Regiment. Other aircraft include a WWI Sopwith Pup and an Argentine Bell UH-1 Iroquois 'Huey' helicopter that was captured during the Falklands War. There is also an example of a Soviet ZSU-23-4 Shika anti-aircraft vehicle that was captured from the Iraqi Army during the Gulf War.

A Sopwith Pup is displayed close to a helicopter and WWII training aircraft

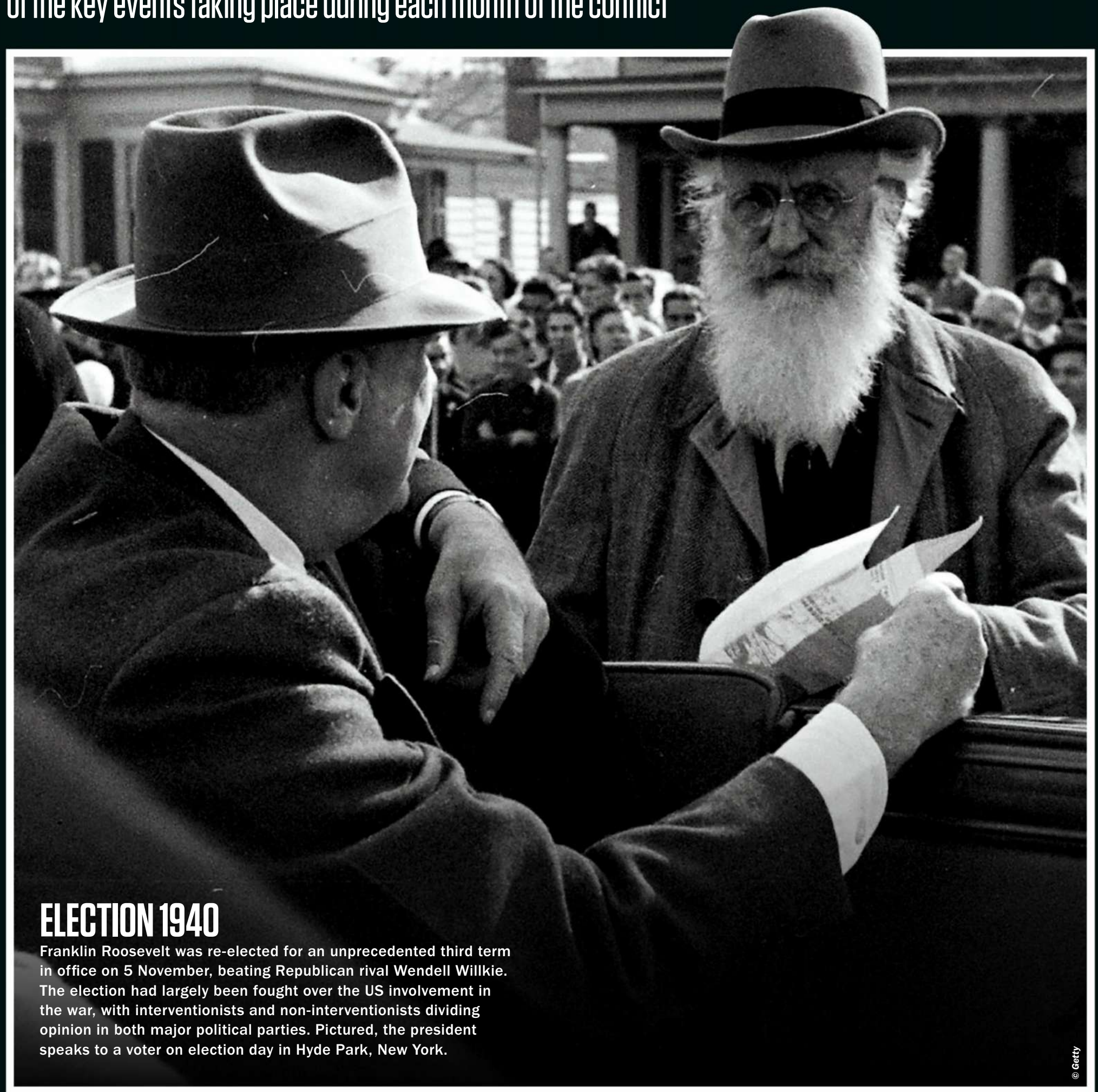
© Alamy

For more information visit:
www.armyflying.com

WWII THIS MONTH...

NOVEMBER 1940

To commemorate 80 years since the Second World War, **History of War** will be taking a look at some of the key events taking place during each month of the conflict



ELECTION 1940

Franklin Roosevelt was re-elected for an unprecedented third term in office on 5 November, beating Republican rival Wendell Willkie. The election had largely been fought over the US involvement in the war, with interventionists and non-interventionists dividing opinion in both major political parties. Pictured, the president speaks to a voter on election day in Hyde Park, New York.

© Getty

COVENTRY BLITZ

On 14 November the city of Coventry suffered its worst night of bombing with 500 tons of high explosives, 30,000 incendiaries and 50 landmines dropping on a single night. The city's cathedral was utterly destroyed in the attack, which was all the more devastating due to the clear, moonlit conditions, giving the bombers greater accuracy. After the war, as a gesture of reconciliation, Coventry was twinned with German cities Kiel and Dresden, both of which were heavily bombed by the Allies.

© Getty

ALLIES GUT?

Foreign ministers Vyacheslav Molotov (left) and Joachim von Ribbentrop greet one another ahead of talks in Berlin. Though Hitler was already at this point making plans for the invasion of the Soviet Union the following year, the two powers were still adhering to the pact agreed the previous year and ostensibly the talks were on the possibility of a closer alliance and inclusion in the Tripartite Pact.

Source: Bundesarchiv, Bild 183-1984-1206-523 / CC-BY-SA 3.0

THE BATTLE OF GABON

Though the government in Paris had fallen months prior, Free French Forces in Africa and elsewhere continued the fight against the Axis powers, and also the new Vichy regime, with most regional colonial leaders throwing their lot in with the Gaulists. When Gabon's regime aligned with Vichy France, under Marshal Pétain, Free French forces invaded from neighbouring Cameroon, under General de Gaulle's orders. The Vichy regime in Libreville, the capital, surrendered on 12 November.

Source: Wiki / PD / CC

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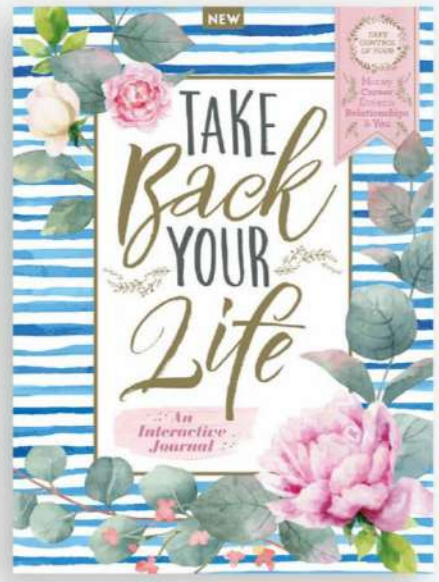

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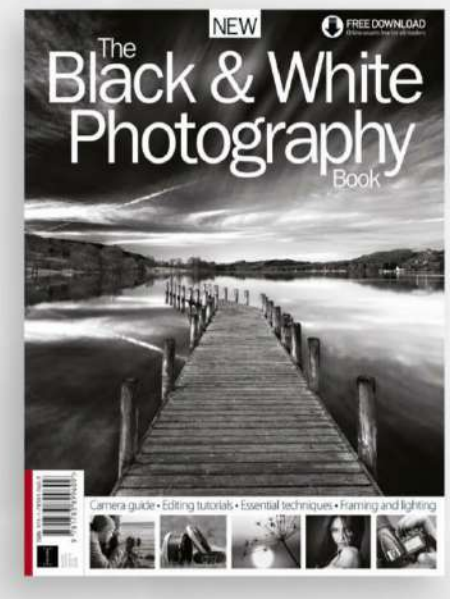

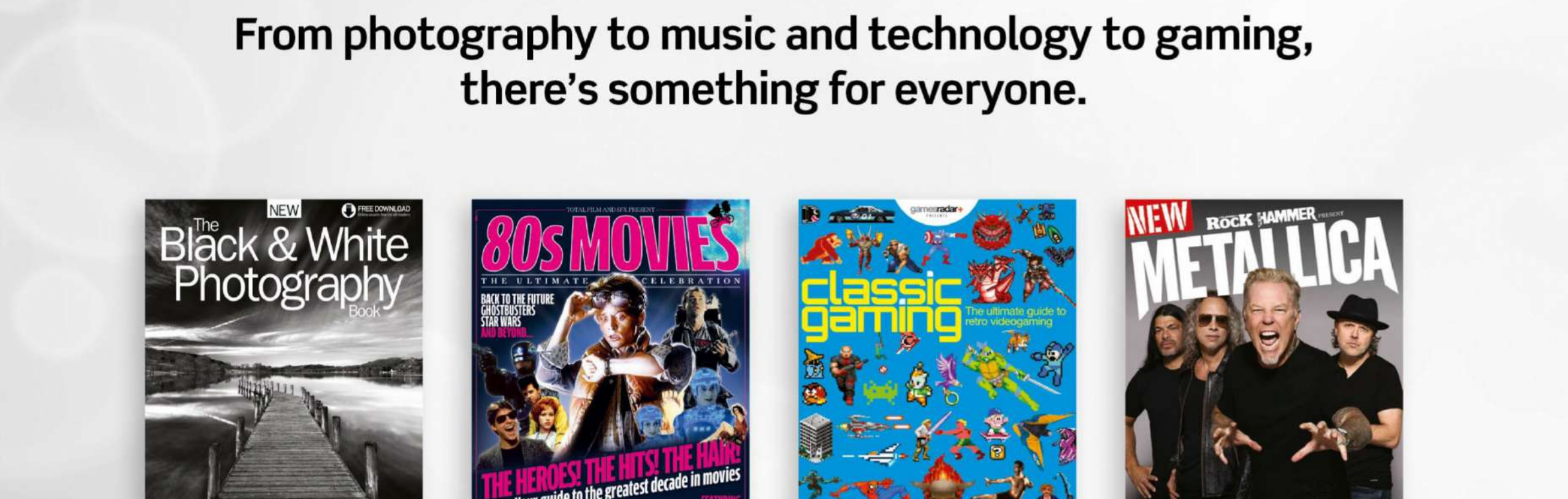

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WALES'S WARTIME SECRETS

BBC presenter Will Millard discusses how the Welsh landscape was the perfect training ground for Allied forces during WWII

idden Wales is a BBC TV series that explores some of the country's long-forgotten locations, from secret beauty spots to industrial and military sites. Now into its second season, the programme's new six-part series has its fifth episode devoted to Wales's wartime history. 'World War II' sees presenter Will Millard discover various sites including plane wrecks in the Brecon Beacons and a top-secret bunker in Monmouthshire.

Millard is an English-born explorer who has led remote expeditions to West Papua and West Africa. A Fellow of both the Royal Geographical Society and Winston Churchill Memorial Trust, he is also an enthusiastic advocate for his adopted home country of Wales. He explains how its geography greatly assisted the Allies during WWII and why the Welsh should be proud of their unsung but vital wartime contribution.

Will Millard emerges from the hatch of the secret Auxiliary Unit bunker in Usk, Monmouthshire

***What is the premise of* Hidden Wales?**

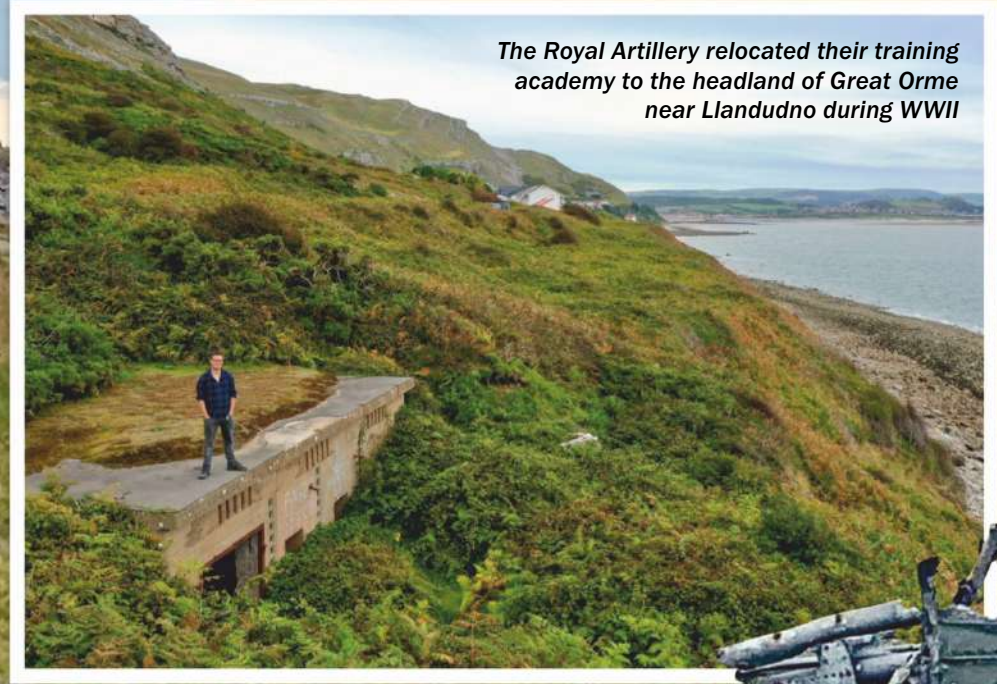
Hidden Wales tries to find any physical aspect of history that might be abandoned, underground, difficult to get to or even hiding in plain sight that informs us about important pieces of Welsh history. One of the great things about the series is that there has been a lot of stuff that we've discovered where history is quite subverted. These are the kinds of things that we try to get our teeth into.

You've led expeditions to the remotest parts of the world but what is it about Wales that appeals to you?

Wales is an incredible country and its people have a great awareness of their culture and history. It is undoubtedly small but it punches way above its weight in what you can see and do. Also, after a decade of leading expeditions, doing things on my own doorstep is actually sometimes more interesting and occasionally dangerous. For example, the 'Mines' episode was pretty terrifying. It shows that you don't have to go on far-flung adventures to still get that pump of adrenalin.

What was the idea behind devoting an episode of* Hidden Wales *to its secret wartime history?

The first series covered stories from the north to the south of the country. We felt that the second series could instead divide the episodes thematically and war was an obvious theme. The nature of Wales means that it has a close association with war because of the military things you can do here. It really lent itself to great military exercises during that period because they could virtually happen in secret. This is because of the large open



The Royal Artillery relocated their training academy to the headland of Great Orme near Llandudno during WWII

The Auxiliary Unit bunker was accessed by a narrow tunnel

spaces the country has compared to other parts of Britain. For example, the SAS now do a huge proportion of their training in the Brecon Beacons and Castlemartin in Pembrokeshire is still a tank live-firing range.

How extensive is Wales's hidden military heritage?
It is completely littered with history. Going right back, I don't believe there is any other place in Europe that has the greatest density of castles and fortifications. There are also certain hot spots like Milford Haven where you can see everything from Napoleonic battlements right through to modern warfare in one small area.

In the Napoleonic era there was a French invasion threat coming from the west. The Welsh coastline is very craggy with lots of coves and a low population so it was a perfect place for invasion. However, during WWII its landscape lent itself to training exercises because it was unlikely that the Nazis would invade there.

How useful was Wales's geography to assist the Allies as a training ground?
It was an extraordinary game-changer. Wales is very hilly and mountainous, both in the north and south, with Snowdonia and the Brecon Beacons. Along the coastlines you have everything you need from coves to big, long sandy beaches where they could conduct rehearsals for D-Day. You couldn't find any other wartime habitat that was as similar to Normandy as Wales because of its sparse population. You could build entire decoy forces in the Welsh landscape because there was so much space. The Royal Artillery even moved their academy from Essex to Great Orme because it was so hidden and remote. Wales was unique in that way so the British were able to get away with doing those massive exercises.

How did it feel to visit the crash site of a Vickers Wellington bomber in the Brecon Beacons?
We all feel quite a lot when we visit the graves of the fallen and it's a very visceral feeling when you're next to actual wreckage. It's not just a stone monument or a graveyard – it's physically there as it was when it crashed into the side of the mountain so it's very emotive.

What was it like to explore one of the few surviving underground bunkers in Usk, Monmouthshire, that would have been used by guerrilla Auxiliary Units in the wake of a Nazi invasion?
It was funny because you're talking about entering the world of the bravest of the brave but I was scared of the spiders in there! It was very claustrophobic and crawling through the tunnel was like the sewer in *The Shawshank Redemption*. There would be people down there confined to about two rooms – one where they slept and one where they cooked as well as a toilet. One hatch led to the main chamber while another was discovered where they would break out into the open against German soldiers. You do wonder what those guys must have been thinking about while they were doing their training because they knew that the consequences would be horrible.

"ITS LANDSCAPE LENT ITSELF TO TRAINING EXERCISES BECAUSE IT WAS UNLIKELY THAT THE NAZIS WOULD INVADE THERE"

To what extent has Wales's contribution been neglected in the history of wartime Britain?
It has been really badly neglected, especially when you consider the work that went into rehearsing the Normandy landings. Without those preparations who knows how D-Day would have turned out. People should know about the training facilities, the soldiers and also the work of predominately women who worked in Welsh munitions factories. There is a sense that Wales is almost at its best when its back is against the wall and the Welsh like that underdog spirit. They are quite reticent about blowing their own trumpet but they shouldn't be.

Hidden Wales ***visits the crash site of a Wellington bomber in the Brecon Beacons. All six members of its Canadian crew were killed***

Images: BBC Wales

The entire first and second series' of *Hidden Wales With Will Millard*, including the 'World War II' episode, are available to watch on BBC iPlayer for 12 months.
To watch the programmes visit: www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer

REVIEWS

Our pick of the latest military history books

NO CONQUEST, NO DEFEAT

Author: Ariane M. Tabatabai **Publisher:** Hurst
Price: £35.00 **Released:** Out now

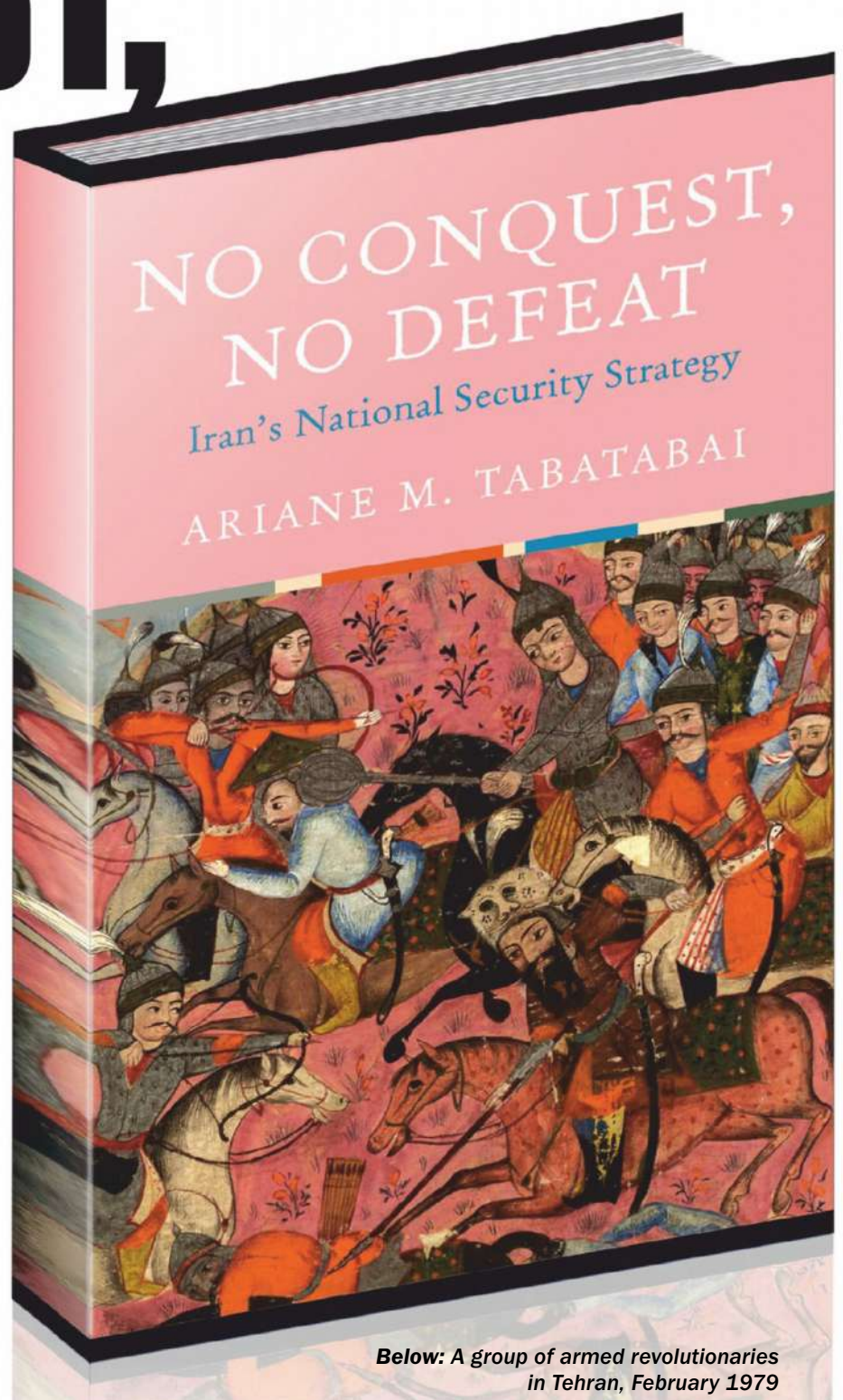
A COMPREHENSIVE OVERVIEW OF IRAN'S SECURITY POLICIES, SET IN THE CONTEXT OF WESTERN FEARS OVER THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC'S NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENT AND MISSILE PROGRAMMES

The year 1979 was the game-changer for Iran's profile on the stage of global politics. The Islamic Revolution ushered in a complete reorientation of the country's political dynamics and, consequently, its foreign and security policies. It came as a particularly worrying development for the US, since the ousted Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi was one of Washington's most steadfast allies.

A prevalent assumption is that post-revolution Iran's foreign and security policy direction is driven by a largely different calculus to that of the previous era. Author Ariane M. Tabatabai argues that the Islamic Republic's strident revolutionary rhetoric masks the elements of continuity between pre- and post-revolutionary Iran. She says past is present in Iran and extends not just into the immediate pre-1979 period, but hundreds of years before.

Tabatabai takes issue with the view that revolutionary states are fundamentally different from their predecessors. Instead, she traces contemporary Iran's defence policy back to the 19th century and highlights elements of long-standing continuity. This, she contends, characterises the country's international behaviour under the Islamic Republic and shows that the revolution fell short of creating a set of different beliefs about national security and defence policy. Instead, the new regime drew on the country's history to outline the contours of its security thinking. In this way, it retained elements of the same belief system that shaped the monarchy.

The book dispels the mysteries surrounding Iran's national security thinking. It also demystifies the contradiction between Iran's rhetoric and its underlying intentions. This is crucial reading for any student of Iran or analyst wishing to go behind the scenes of the Islamic Republic. **JS**



***Below:** A group of armed revolutionaries in Tehran, February 1979*

Protestors take to the streets in Tehran

Image: Wiki / PD/ CC / Maryam Zandi

Image: Wiki / PD/ CC / khabaronline.ir

BLACK CROSS RED STAR

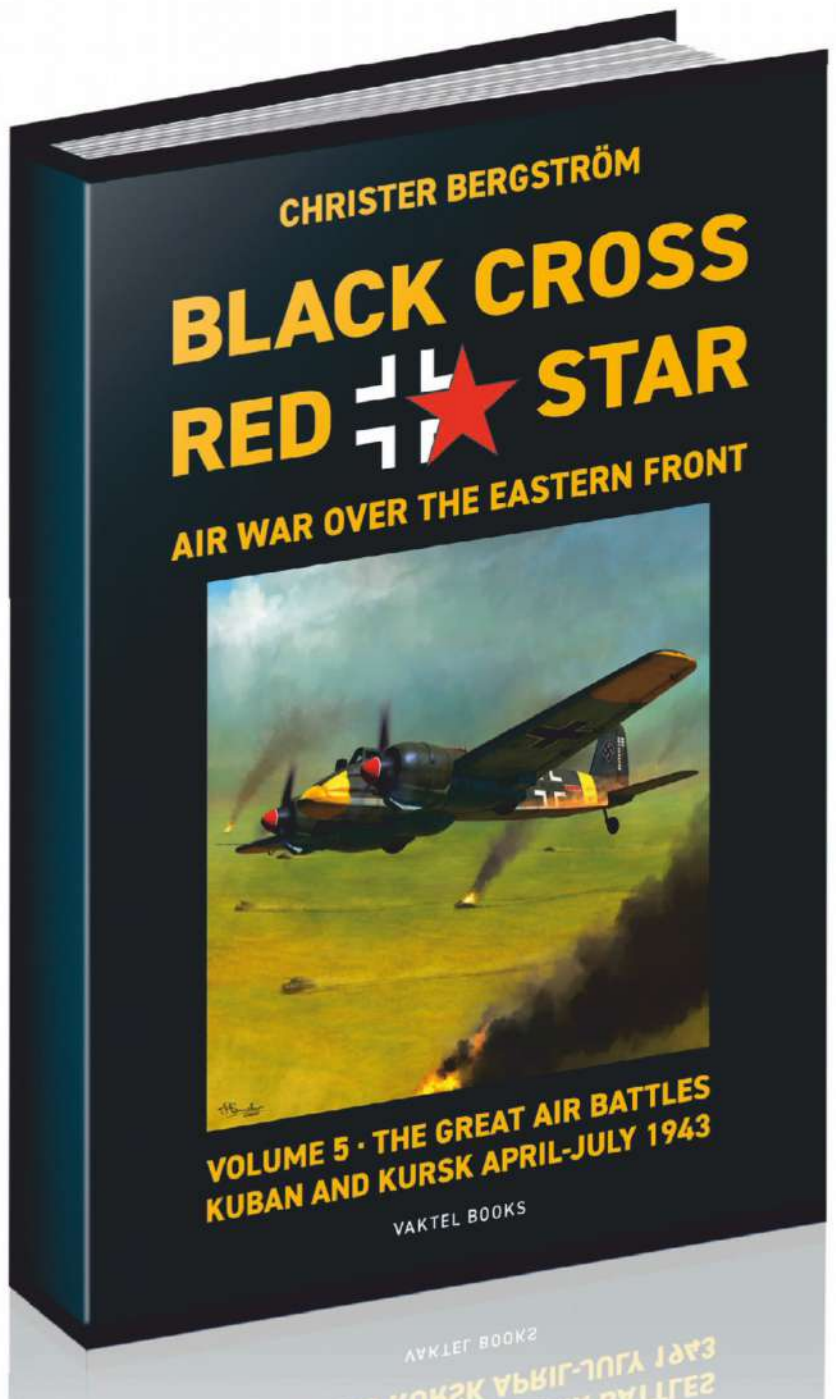
AN ACCOUNT OF HOW THE RED AIR FORCE TURNED THE TABLES ON THE LUFTWAFFE

Author: Christer Bergström **Publisher:** Vaktel Books **Price:** £25

The author of *Black Cross Red Star* is a well-established Swedish military historian and a highly respected expert on the Eastern Front air war. This is the fifth volume his ongoing series on this subject and one of the most important. Drawing extensively on first hand veterans' testimonies, as well as German and Russian archives, Bergström's latest study covers in considerable detail the resurgence of the Red Air Force in 1943.

Notably he focuses on two key air battles fought that year over the Kuban and Kursk. The initial engagement saw the Red Air Force gain air superiority against the Luftwaffe for the very first time. This success encouraged it to launch a massive pre-emptive strike just before Hitler's Operation Citadel commenced at Kursk. Despite the Russians' newfound confidence this daring attack ended in disaster, but they quickly recovered and held their own in the subsequent battle.

This book is lavishly illustrated throughout with exceptional photos that are generously captioned. Many of them are from private collections and have not been published before. They show in quite intimate detail every aspect of the brutal air war over the Ost Front. The appendices include a colour plate section that is ideal for modellers. If you are interested in aerial warfare during the Second World War, then this well-researched title should be on your shelves. **ATJ**



THE LENIN PLOT

AN INCREDIBLE STORY OF THE DARKEST CHAPTER IN THE HISTORY OF AMERICAN ESPIONAGE

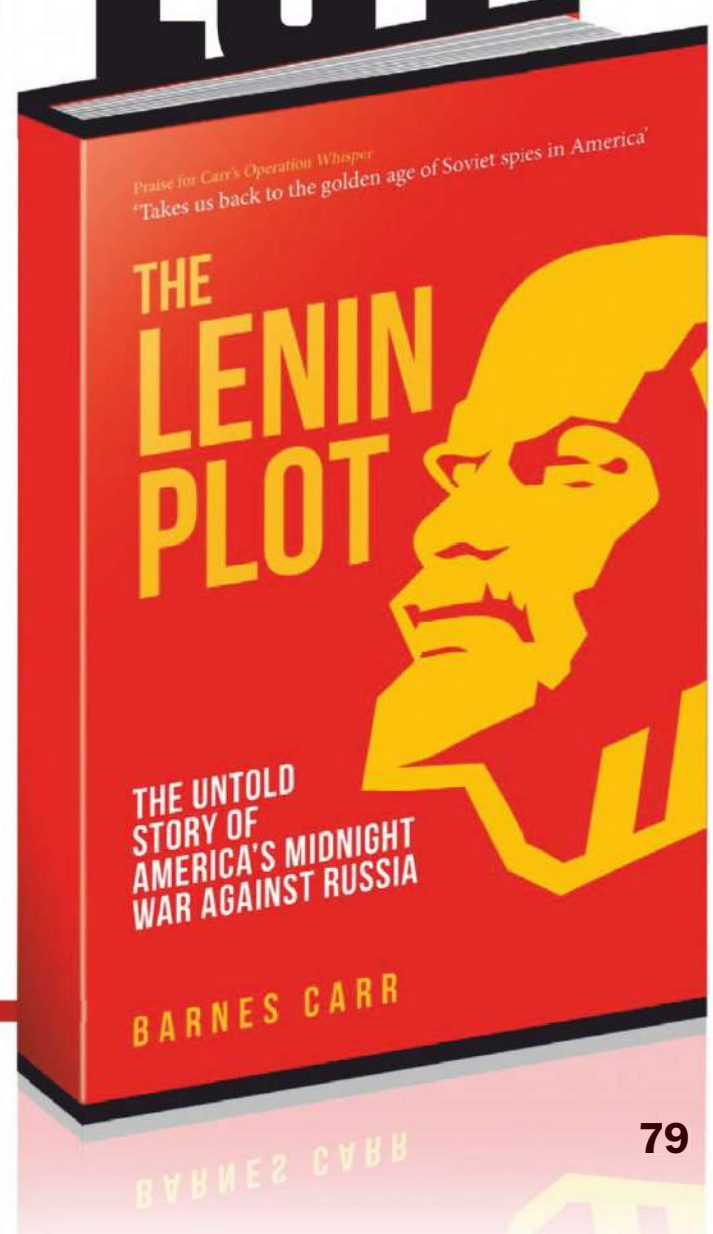
Author: Barnes Carr **Publisher:** Amberley **Price:** £20.00

The bloodshed on the Eastern Front during the First World War has been well and widely documented, and it would reasonable to assume there was nothing left to uncover from the wind-blasted ruins of Russia's involvement in the conflict. Thankfully, this forensically researched and at times gripping new contribution to the annals of 20th century espionage proves otherwise.

Confronted with Russia's sudden withdrawal from the war in the wake of the 1917 Revolution, the Entente allies faced a desperate dilemma: how to encourage Lenin's fledgling government to return to the fray and maintain the pressure on Germany.

Establishing an elaborate spy network in Russia overseen by DeWitt Clinton Poole (a US diplomat known to his friends as 'Poodles') and spearheaded by the marvellously named Xenophon de Blumenthal Kalamatiano, the American authorities first attempted to bribe the communists into continuing the war against Germany. When this failed, they resorted (with President Woodrow Wilson's blessing) to invading Russia with a multinational force of 20,000 men (including 4,344 US troops as well as British, French, Polish and even Chinese soldiers) in a bid to seize key cities and forcibly remove Lenin from power.

A litany of remarkable errors (including lax security, insufficient supplies and waging an undeclared war during the incredibly harsh Russian winter) ultimately doomed President Wilson's plans. The failed intervention to topple the communists is something Washington would scramble to hide, but Russia would never forget. Fortunately for those who relish a wartime spy drama filled with murky agents, femme fatales and bloody revenge, neither did author Carr. **CG**



A GROUP PHOTOGRAPH

BEFORE, NOW AND IN-BETWEEN

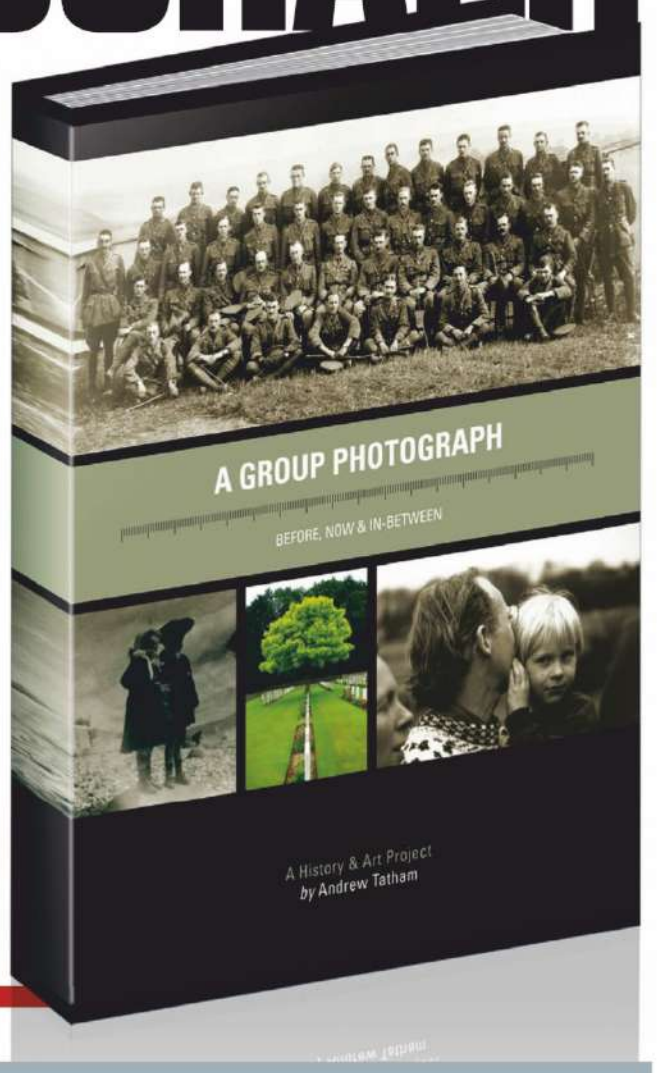
Writer: Andrew Tatham **Publisher:** Arvo Veritas **Price:** £21.80

A WORLD WAR ONE PHOTOGRAPH POWERFULLY BROUGHT TO LIFE

A World War I group photograph of 46 officers sent Andrew Tatham on a remarkable quest. The men were from the 8th Battalion, Royal Berkshire Regiment, the picture was taken at the end of their training on Salisbury Plain in May 1915, and Tatham's great-grandfather, Colonel William Walton was their commanding officer. In 20 years of painstaking research the author gathered memorabilia, letters and reminiscences concerning everyone in the photograph. The result was an imaginative history and art project, exhibited at Ypres's Cloth Hall (from September 2015 to January 2016) with an accompanying book, *A Group Photograph*. It has now been reprinted – and it vividly brings these men to life.

Colonel Walton's Battalion shipped to France in August 1915. A month later it was flung into the Battle of Loos. The battle saw the first use of gas by the British army, and a sudden change of wind direction meant much of the chlorine vapour settled over the assembling Royal Berkshires. "Losses very severe," Walton wrote to his wife after the first day's fighting. On that day alone 11 of the officers in the group photograph had been killed, seven wounded and another seven gassed by their own side.

Tatham follows the stories of these men, giving us a moving portrayal. The book is beautifully produced and – in its recreation of lives before the war and what happened after – pays fitting tribute to the brave soldiers in the photograph and the many like them. **MJ**



I SHALL NOT BE AWAY LONG

THE FIRST WORLD WAR LETTERS OF LT COL CHARLES BARTLETT

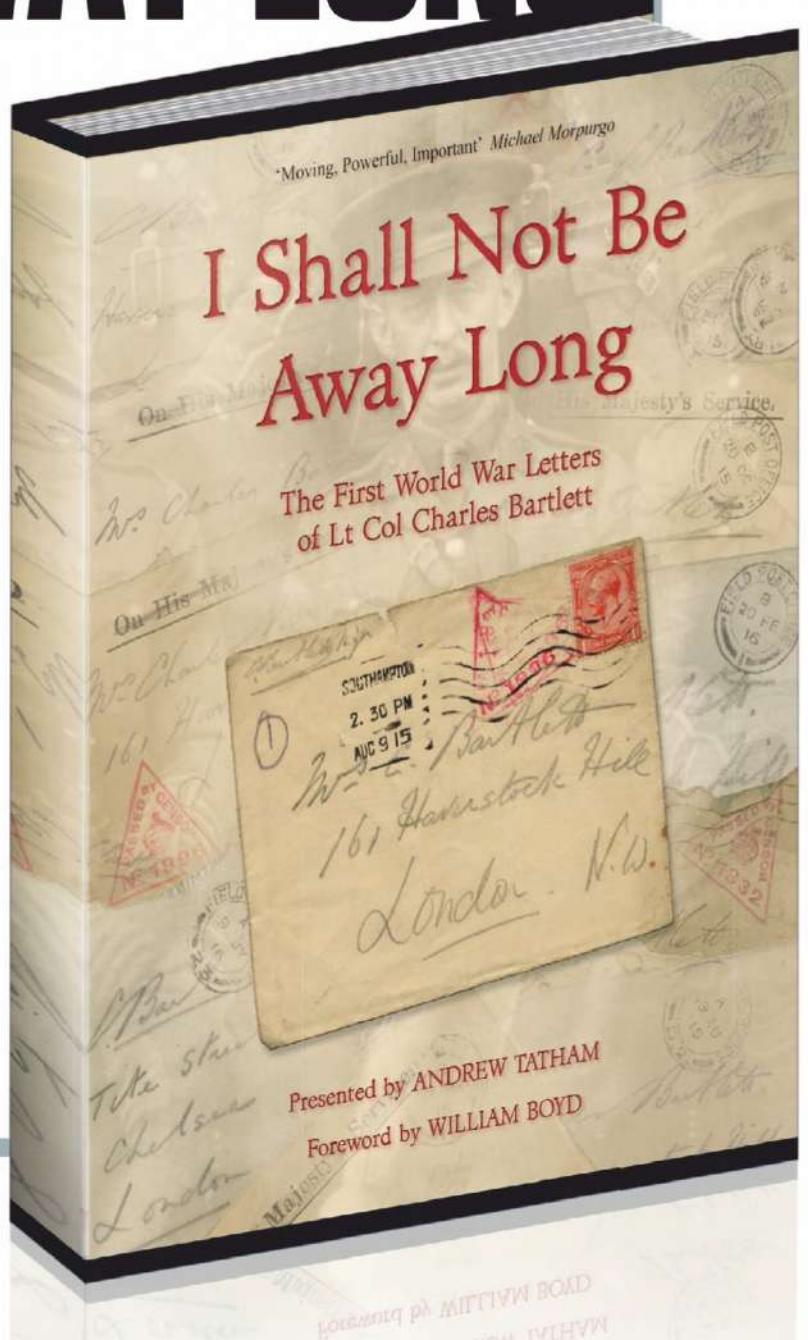
Writer: Andrew Tatham **Publisher:** Arvo Veritas **Released:** 11 November

LETTERS FROM THE FRONT – AN OFFICER'S VIEW

Lieutenant Colonel Charles Bartlett was a larger-than-life character and his letters to his actress wife (from August 1915 to March 1917) cast an amused and sometimes roguish eye over life on the Western Front. This follow-up to Andrew Tatham's *A Group Photograph* (Bartlett was second-in-command to the author's great grandfather, before taking over his battalion) works well either as a companion to the earlier volume or a fascinating collection in its own right.

We travel with Bartlett on a war journey from bluff optimism (revealed in the title extract) to ground-down exhaustion. Along the way, he recounts not only the heroism but also the eccentricities and acts of insubordination of those around him. Problems of command are enlivened by asides on the complicated love lives of his fellow officers. Even when the content of some of his letters is grim, Bartlett's innate cheerfulness never entirely deserts him. "Poor Colonel Graeme … was killed yesterday by a big shell which just happened to land plumb in the trench," he recounts, before concluding matters with thanks for a gift of kippers, which "were excellent eating".

Charles Bartlett, regarded as the black sheep of his family, would later divorce (in part caused by an earlier affair, which his wife found out about). However the war brought out the best of him and his letters – always entertaining – show him as a kind and caring commander. Tatham does the roller-coaster ride of Bartlett's life proper justice in an impeccably produced book. **MJ**



NEXT MONTH

BRITAIN IN THE BLITZ

- Inside the Luftwaffe bombing strategy
- Coventry survivor interview
- RAF night fighter tactics

Image: Wiki / PD / Gov

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15TH CENTURY CROSSBOW

This decorative weapon is the oldest of its kind in existence and was owned by a German count

Ulrich V, Count of Württemberg (1413-80) was a nobleman who spent most of his life conducting military campaigns within what is now Germany. At this time, Germany was split into many states of varying size, which loosely came under the tenuous rule of the Holy Roman Emperor. Ulrich managed to expand his lands through marriage to encompass the areas around Stuttgart.

He initially supported Emperor Frederick III against the Swiss during the Old Zürich War but also fought against him as part of an alliance of nobles who marched against pro-Imperial towns. This included an attack on Widdern where Ulrich destroyed its castle in 1458. However, Ulrich reconciled with Frederick and led Imperial forces against Bavaria in 1461. He was also defeated at the Battle of Seckenheim in 1462 and captured before he was ransomed.

As befitting a noble soldier of fortune, Ulrich was well armed and at the height of his military career he acquired this ornate crossbow. Attributed to Heinrich Heid von Winterthur, the weapon is the earliest known dated crossbow in existence. Dating to 1460, it is carved with a 'staghorn' decoration, which is inscribed with the coat of arms of Württemberg and Savoy. Ulrich is identified as the owner along with his third wife Princess Marguerite of Savoy. Above the crossbow's trigger is a rare inscription in Hebrew that translates as "Hold God dear and be high-hearted!". This script is unique because it was rare for Hebrew to be used on a personal item by a medieval Christian patron of lavish weapons.

Images: Metropolitan Museum of Art

Although owned by a German nobleman, the crossbow may have been manufactured in Switzerland

Source: Wiki / PD / Daderot

Ulrich V was married three times and fathered nine legitimate children, one of whom managed to elevate the House of Württemberg to a duchy

This crossbow is part of the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. Known as 'The Met', the museum is the largest art museum in the United States and contains the popular Department of Arms and Armor. For more information visit:

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